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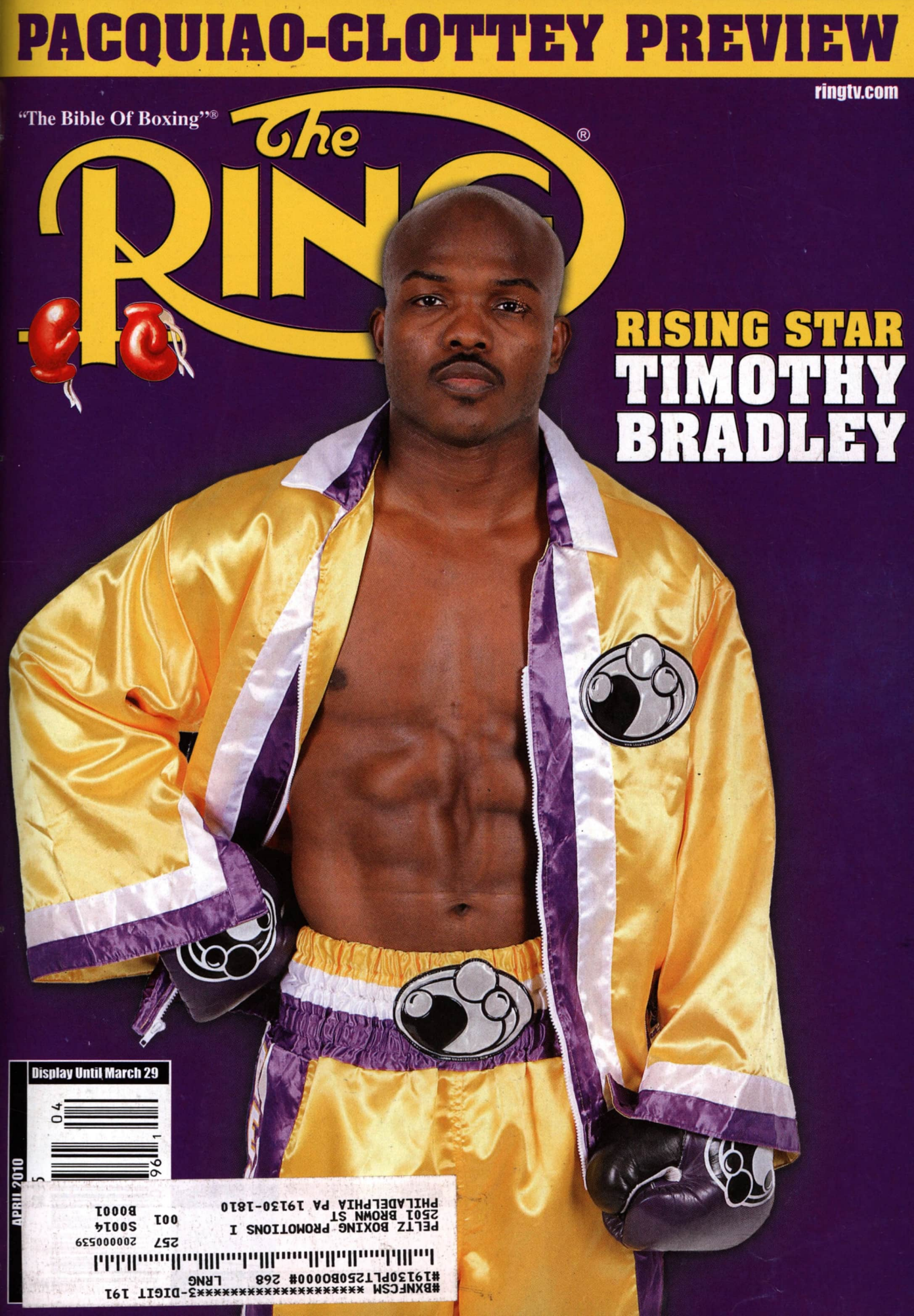

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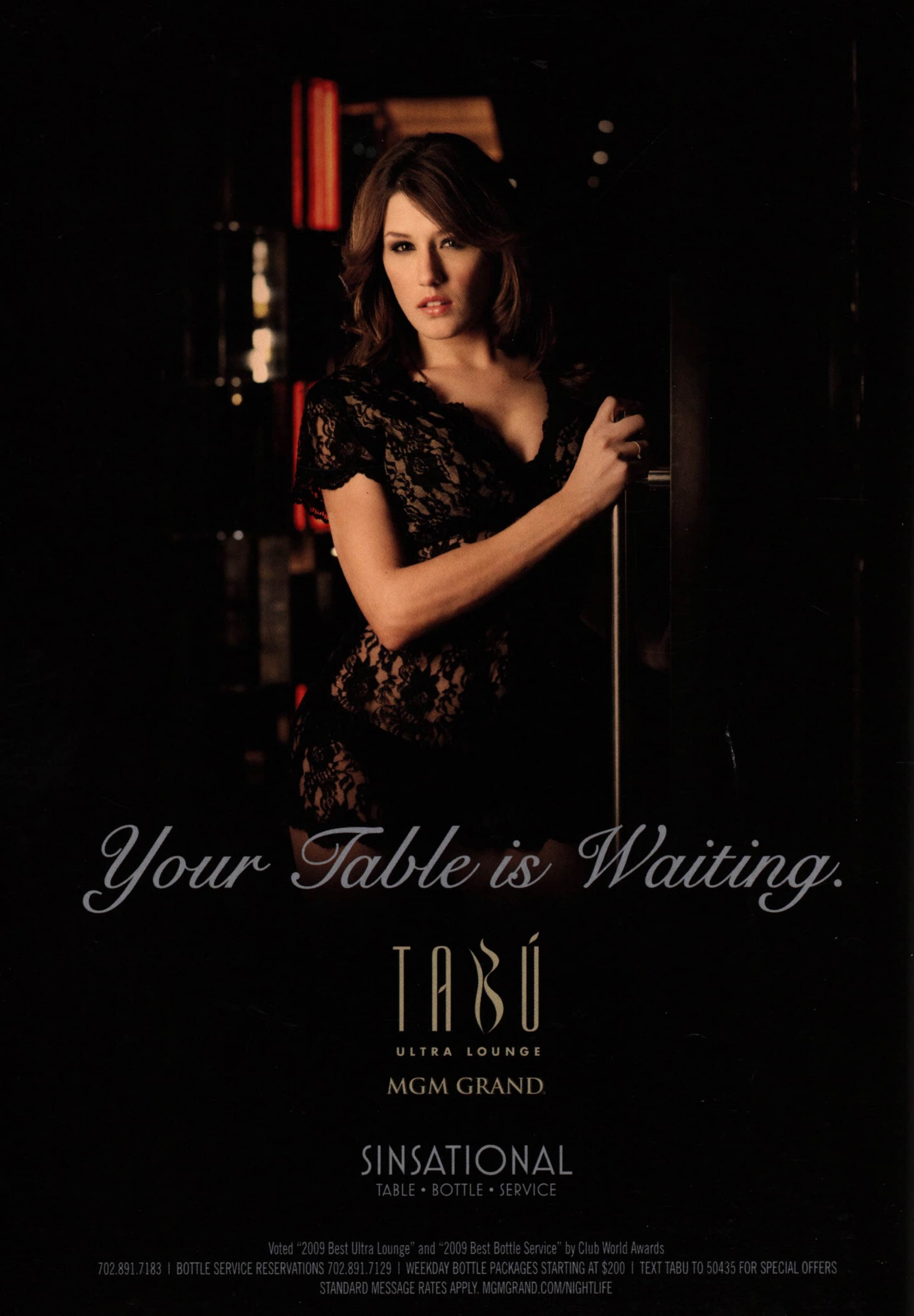
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Volume 89, No. 5 April 2010

The RING

The Perfect Chill Pill

By the first week of February, most of the angst that had gripped boxing for much of the previous two months had been assuaged by the panacea of anticipation.

Thanks to a convergence of allegedly random events, we now have the Manny Pacquioa-Joshua-Clottey *and* Shane Mosley-Floyd Mayweather bouts to dissolve the disappointment of losing (perhaps only temporarily) a Pacquiao-Mayweather showdown.

Of course, by the time you read this, one or both of those two fights could have been postponed or canceled. It's unlikely but, if we've learned anything from what transpired in between Pacquiao's beat down of Miguel Cotto and the signing of Mosley-Mayweather, it's that things can change awfully quick.

This should not come as breaking news to the boxing industry or its customers, but it seems to be a lesson that does not sink in easily. Every time the sport suffers a setback, people act like the sky is falling.

Why do we see such a juvenile reaction time and time again? Why do the vast majority of boxing fans have absolutely no patience? Why do they see everything in such absolute terms?

Sadly, the answer is all-too obvious: We live in an era when instant gratification is what most people crave and expect. Give them what they want, when they want it, or they'll throw a hissy fit.

Most of the media is just as bad. It overemphasizes the negative and undercuts the positive. There's far more coverage of the peripheral issues than the actual fights and fighters, a self-defeating policy that diverts us from the very things that made us fall in love with boxing in the first place.

Boxing isn't like other sports, where schedules are etched in stone and opponents are pretty much preordained. Instead, it is an anarchistic system—always has been and always will be.

As Larry Merchant likes to say, boxing is the "theater of the unexpected," and that goes for what takes place outside the ropes as well as in the ring. If it's uniformity you seek, you've picked the wrong sport.

But if you take a philosophical view and persevere through all the craziness, the reward can at times be truly special.

In this case the payoff is the opportunity to see the three best fighters in the world in a pair of bouts taking place less than two months apart.

Furthermore, there's a good chance of seeing the winners square off later this year.

Mayweather-Mosley is a magnificent match, one with enormous implications for the fighters and the sport. The contestants are second and third, respectively, in THE RING's current pound-for-pound ratings and, with a little bit of luck, their fight could very well live up to the highest expectations.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao's bout with Clottey at Cowboys Stadium promises to be as much an event as a fight, and although Clottey lacks the star quality of Pacquiao's recent foes, he's tougher than any welterweight Mayweather has faced since Zab Judah in 2006. The pound-for-pound king will earn his paycheck.

So for all the wails of anguish, doomsday bloggers, and the dire predictions of knee-jerk pundits, things seem to have worked out very well indeed. This time!

◆◆◆

Manny Pacquiao has requested that he remain THE RING junior welterweight champion because he intends to defend the title following his March 13 bout with Joshua Clottey, his second consecutive fight at welterweight. THE RING has honored Pacquiao's request, but has informed him that if he does not defend 140-pound title in his next fight, THE RING will consider it tantamount to relinquishing the belt and vacate the title.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

FOUNDER
Nathaniel S. Fleischer
(1888-1972)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Nigel Collins

MANAGING EDITOR
Joseph Santoliquito

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
David Romanosky

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER
Olivia Sheehan

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Eric Raskin

SENIOR WRITER
William Dettloff

PLEASE SEND ALL EDITORIAL COMMENTS TO:
comeoutwriting@yahoo.com

CONTROLLER
Deborah L. Harrison

EXEC. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Kushiek Matthews

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
Robert Gasparri
(213) 233-2952
sepub@sepublications.com

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC
P.O. Box 529
Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0529
1-800-846-6438
custsrvcsep@sepublications.com

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[Opening Shot]

Deep In the Heart Of Texas

Although he tops virtually everybody's pound-for-pound list, Manny Pacquiao doesn't seem to mind that promoter Bob Arum got the Dallas Cowboys football jersey with number one on the back. Pac-Man, Arum, and Joshua Clottey were all guests of Cowboys owner Jerry Jones (far right), who will host the March 13 Pacquiao-Clottey fight at his new $1.15 billion stadium. No word yet on whether or not Pacquiao will accept Jones' offer to play scatback for the Cowboys next year.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

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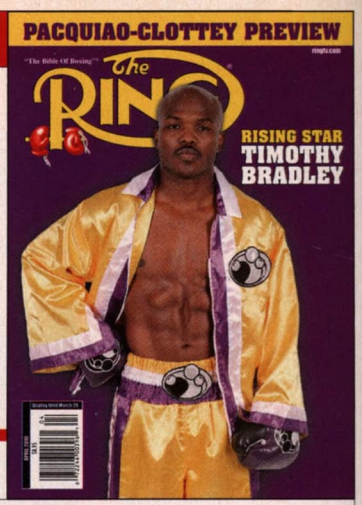

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Cover Design by **David Romanosky**

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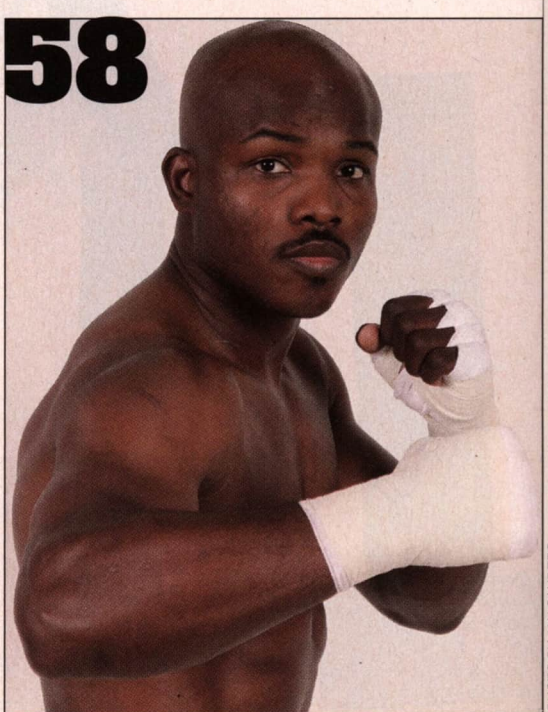

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

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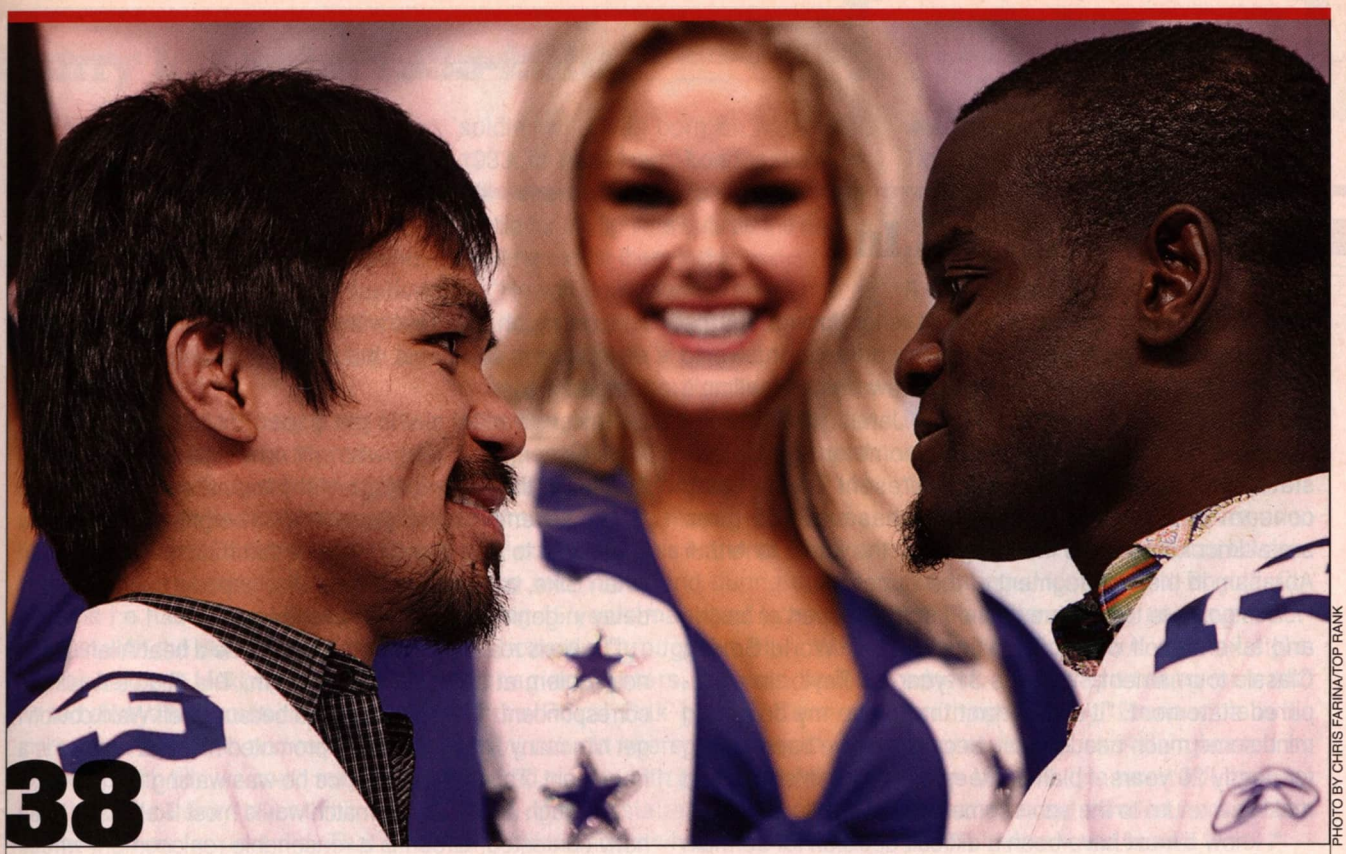

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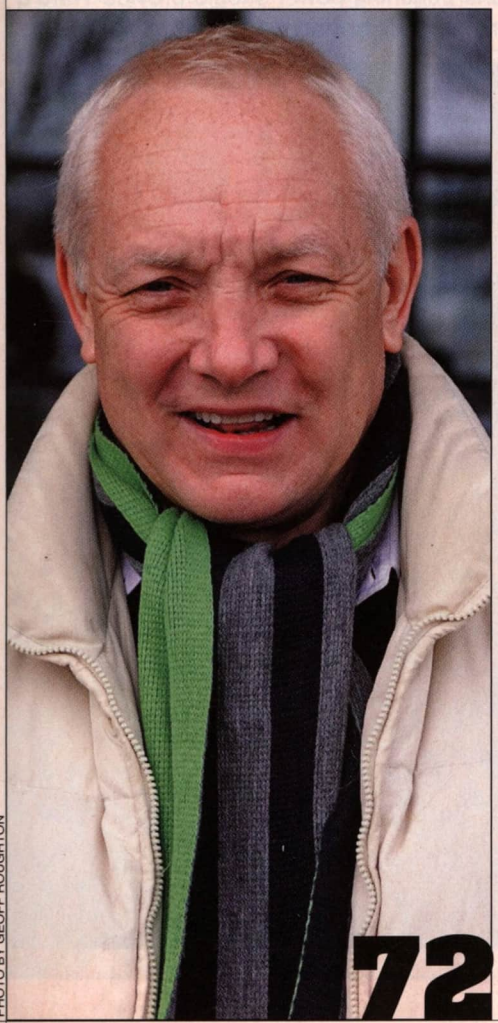

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PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

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Taylor Out, Green In

There was a collective sigh of relief throughout the boxing world when former middleweight world champion Jermain Taylor withdrew from Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic" on January 12. Taylor's decision came a few weeks after promoter Lou DiBella stated that he would no longer represent Taylor, citing concern for Taylor's health. Taylor has suffered three brutal knockouts in his last five fights, the latest to Arthur Abraham in the first segment of the Super Six.

"I'm going to take some time off from the sport of boxing and take myself out of Showtime Sports' World Boxing Classic tournament," said the 31-year-old Taylor in a prepared statement. "It's important that I give my body and mind some much-needed rest, because I have been boxing for nearly 20 years. I plan on keeping myself in shape and making a return to the sport sometime in the future."

"I know it must have been a difficult decision for Jermain and I'm very happy for him and his family that he decided to give himself a much-needed rest," DiBella told ESPN.com.

How much of a rest will do to improve Taylor's punch resistance is debatable, but at least he's out of immediate danger.

Taylor's vacant slot in the Super Six has been filled by Allan Green, 29-1 (20), who will now face Andre Ward on April 17 in the second stage of the tournament. Green, THE RING's seventh-ranked super middleweight, was originally scheduled to face Sakio Bika, but that match was scrapped when Bika, a resident of Australia, experienced a lengthy delay in getting his work visa renewed.

"Sakio is really disappointed. He felt he'd beat Allan Green no problem at all," said Paul Upham, THE RING's Australia correspondent. "He feels frustrated because Jeff Wald couldn't get him many fights when they promoted him and now he is a free agent. This was the chance he was waiting for."

Although a Bika-Green match would most likely have been hotly contested, Green is a reasonable replacement whose boxing skills and punching power should provide Ward a much more competitive fight than the shopworn Taylor.

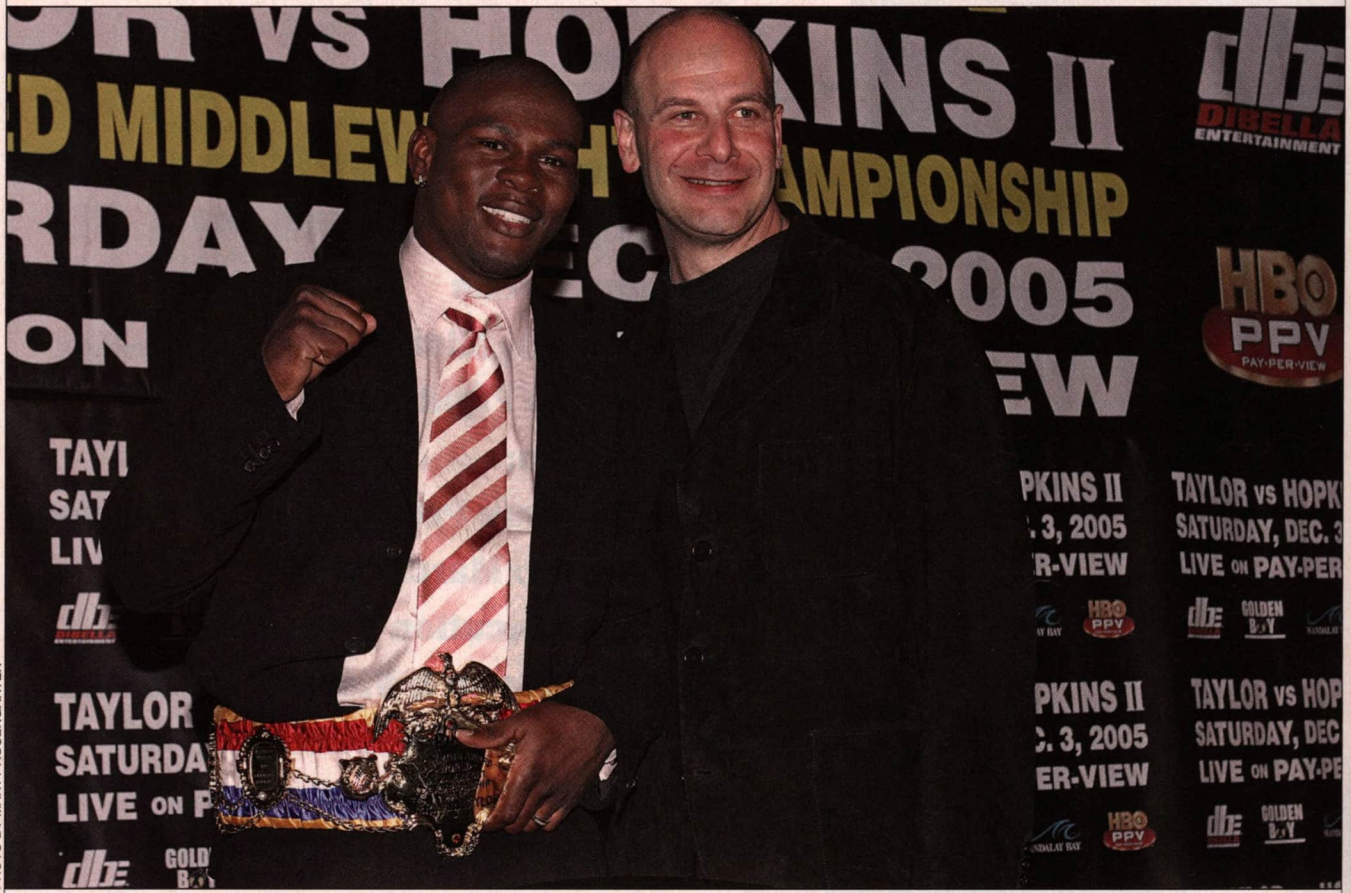


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Taylor and DiBella in 2005

Terry Lawless, 1933-2010

Terry Lawless may never have laced on the gloves in his boxing life, but the knowledge that he imparted to the fighters he prepared for the ring—men like John H. Stracey, Frank Bruno, Jim Watt, Charlie Magri, and Maurice Hope—made an immeasurable contribution to the British fight scene for almost half a century.

"My career wasn't really going anywhere and I had split with my manager in Scotland when Terry called me," Watt recalled after Lawless passed away in the early hours of Christmas Eve after a gall bladder operation in Spain. "At the time he had John H Stracey, who had just won the world title a couple of months before in Mexico. He said to me he had always felt I could have achieved more than I had done and reckoned if I signed up with him we could maybe put that right. But I didn't ever think it was going to go as far as it did. That one phone call just completely changed my life. If Terry hadn't picked up the phone that day, I'm not under any illusions, I would never have been world champion and would never have had the life that I've enjoyed ever since"

Watt won the vacant WBC lightweight title against Colombian Alfredo Pitalua in 1979, made four title defenses before losing over 15 rounds against Alexis Arguello in 1981 and, significantly, made a life and career for himself as a brilliant broadcaster on the back of his association with the former soldier who was born on March 29, 1933, in West Ham, London. Lawless will be remembered as much for what he did for his fighters outside the ring as what he did for them inside.

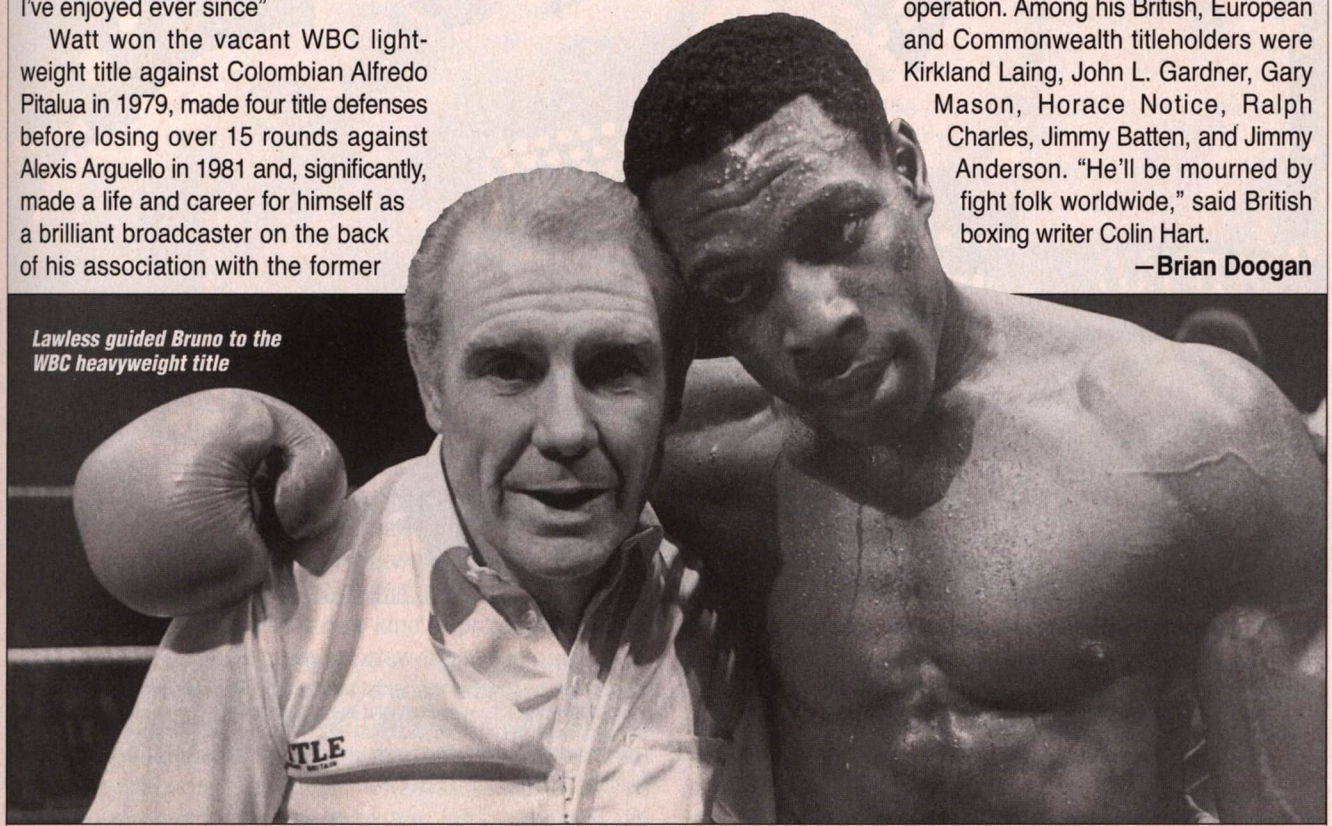
"He will be remembered as one of the all-time great boxing managers and there will be a parade of boxing writers who will confirm that he was also one of the nicest people in the sports business," revealed journalist and family friend Norman Giller. "He took out a boxing manager's license after completing his National Service in the mid-1950s and during the following 45 years managed more than 50 boxers. Throughout his career managing fighters, he was based at the Royal Oak gym in Canning Town, near to where he was born. He worked closely with promoters Mickey Duff, Jarvis Astaire, Harry Levene, and Mike Barrett when they were the powers in British boxing throughout the 1960s and into the 1980s."

Together they formed what became known as the cartel that controlled British boxing with an iron fist. The training team he lined up of Frank Black, Jimmy Tibbs, and George Francis combined to make Stracey, Magri, Watt, Hope and, ultimately, Frank Bruno into titleholders. He also treated his fighters like sons. A famous confrontation in the 1980s illustrated this when Barrett, one of the leading promoters at the time, shouted at Lawless that he wanted his fighters to win every fight. Lawless looked at him with a mixture of contempt and pity. "Yes, of course I do," he replied.

Bruno's career would never even have gotten off the ground had Lawless not arranged for the trip to Bogota, Colombia, where Bruno underwent surgery to correct a form of short-sightedness. "Terry was a boxing man, who ran things his way," Bruno wrote in his autobiography, skillfully ghosted by Kevin Mitchell. "He never left the East End and he surrounded himself with people he knew and trusted."

In his final years, Lawless lived predominantly in Spain with Sylvia, his wife of 53 years. His health had been deteriorating before he died following complications from the gall bladder operation. Among his British, European and Commonwealth titleholders were Kirkland Laing, John L. Gardner, Gary Mason, Horace Notice, Ralph Charles, Jimmy Batten, and Jimmy Anderson. "He'll be mourned by fight folk worldwide," said British boxing writer Colin Hart.

—Brian Doogan



Lawless guided Bruno to the WBC heavyweight title

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
01/08/10	Andrey Fedosov KO 2 Lionel Butler	ESPN2	h	C	C	C+
Russian looks like a fun banger with decent finishing skills						
01/08/10	Roman Karmazin KO 10 Dionisio Miranda	ESPN2	m	B-	C+	B+
Both visit the canvas before favorite scores comeback kayo						
01/15/10	Demetrius Andrade KO 2 Bernardo Guereca	ESPN2	jm	C	D-	D+
Andrade beat better guys in the middle school playground						
01/15/10	Juan Burgos KO 12 Juan Martinez	ESPN2	f	B-	C	B-
Add late power to Burgos' growing list of positives						
01/16/10	Diego Magdaleno W 8 Gerardo Robles	FOX Sports	l	C	C+	C+
Magdaleno's trunks were stolen from Hector Camacho's closet						
01/16/10	Vanes Martirosyan W 10 Kassim Ouma	FOX Sports	jm	B	B	B-
New series starts with old problem: bad judging						
01/23/10	Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 2 Rogers Mtagwa	HBO	f	B+	B	B
Gamboa looked scary good						
01/23/10	Juan Manuel Lopez KO 7 Steven Luevano	HBO	f	A	A	B-
Most impressive win of "Juanma's" career … so far						

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Lopez (right) had too much firepower for Luevano to handle

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Boxing Bookshelf

Acclaim as boxing's supreme artist was one thing, but the subject of *Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson* (Knopf, 464 pages, hardcover, $27.95) ached to translate the style and aura he exuded between the ropes to a grander, more transcendent stage.

While Robinson succeeded up to a point—between championship reigns he failed to become the nightclub luminary he felt destined to become, and ended up laboring in the ring into his mid-40s—author Wil Haygood's thesis is that mere recognition as the greatest boxer in the history of the sport doesn't do justice to the life and career of the onetime welterweight and five-time 160-pound champion who died in 1989.

"It is easy and far too simple to keep making the pound-for-pound claim," Haygood writes. "The arc of his fighting career demands a deeper consideration. (Robinson) lives because he is beyond imitation. He is, as Stravinsky was to music, a wonder, a mystery, a piece of time."

And damned if Haygood doesn't make a very convincing case for that in this outstanding and wonderfully written tome that in both size and presentation is the pound-for-pound champion among the handful of Robinson biographies that have tried to explicate one of boxing's most elusive demigods.

"He was hiding from me even when he was around," Larry L. King (the author who wrote about Robinson in the 1960s, not TV's talking corpse) told Haygood.

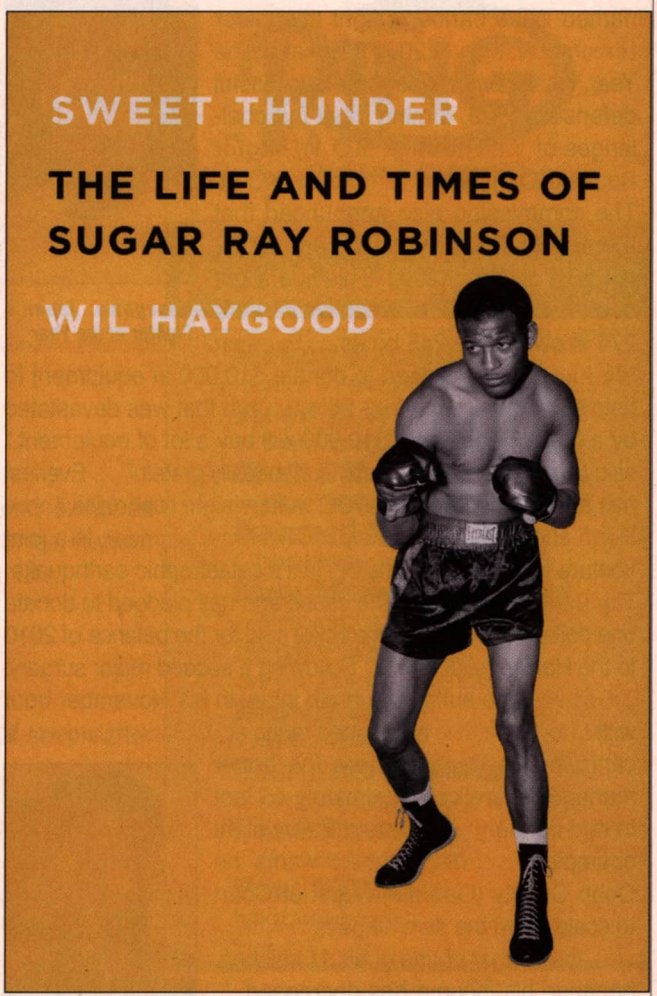
W.C. Heinz, the exalted sportswriter, viewed Robinson as a nonpareil in the ring but couldn't figure him out otherwise and declined an invitation to be Sugar Ray's official biographer mostly on account of Robinson's evasions and outright lies regarding his one-year stint in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Haygood lays out what happened pretty straightforwardly: After touring American military bases with Joe Louis, Robinson returned to New York before he was to ship out for a tour of European bases, and then, "convinced ... the world was passing him by," simply walked away from his military obligation.

Not wanting a PR nightmare, the Army cut him loose with an honorable discharge, and "Robinson figured he would salvage his rising career—and blunt the criticism sure to come—by becoming a champion."

Which is pretty much what happened because, as Haygood writes, Sugar Ray's "fists had become his politics." And by the time he won the welterweight championship in 1946, "he was at the dawn of his full potential ... imagining the ways to invent a whole new kind of prizefighter."

The fighter the Gotham sportswriters originally nicknamed "Death" loved jazz music and according to Haygood even hummed tunes to himself between the rounds of his fights. Robinson lost only one of his five fights to Jake LaMotta, he writes, because "whereas LaMotta hewed to only one musical note, Robinson jumped to a jazzy vibe, thus turning the boxing canvas to the musical stage syncopations that best suited him."



His creative contemporaries, singer Lena Horne, trumpeter Miles Davis, poet Langston Hughes, and photographer Gordon Parks saw Robinson as a full-fledged peer, and their lives and attitudes are also held up to a revealing light in Haygood's examination of the whole artistic African-American culture Robinson not only inhabited but helped to create.

The boxing fan who couldn't care less about that will be just as enthralled by compelling portraits of Henry Armstrong, LaMotta, Randy Turpin, George "Sugar" Costner, and poor Jimmy Doyle, who died, literally, by Robinson's hand.

I will quibble, though, with Haygood's assertion that Robinson's ongoing tug-of-war with promoters and overseers of boxing was "to avenge all the Negro fighters who had been wronged," including Charley Burley. Since Robinson wanted nothing to do with Burley in the ring, it's doubtful he was looking out for him.

But anyone interested in the original Sugar Ray will be jazzed by this informative and worthwhile biography.

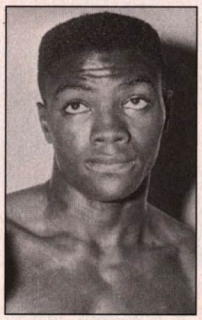
—Pete Ehrmann

Outside the Ropes

The Japan Boxing Commission named WBC bantamweight titleholder **Hozumi Hasegawa** 2009's Boxer of the Year. Hasegawa made three successful defenses in '09, turning back the challenges of **Vusi Malinga** (KO 1), **Nestor Rocha** (KO 1), and **Alvaro Perez** (KO 4). The commission also announced that there were 260 promotions and 2,082 bouts in Japan in 2009. This is a slight decrease from 2008, when there were 276 shows and 2,245 bouts ... **Everlast Worldwide** has pledged to donate $10,000 in equipment to help outfit the **Morris Park Boxing Club** that was devastated by a fire in December. "$10,000 will buy a lot of equipment," said gym owner **Dex Pejcinovic**. "I'm really grateful" ... Everlast has also teamed up with WBC welterweight titleholder **Andre Berto** and Berto's promoter, **DiBella Entertainment**, in a joint venture to support victims of Haiti's catastrophic earthquake. **Top Rank** is also aiding the cause and has pledged to donate one dollar from each boxing ticket sold for the balance of 2010 to the Haitian relief fund ... Following a second major surgery, **Z Gorres**, who suffered a brain injury in his November bout with **Luis Melendez**, has started rehab at **Dr. Benito Calderon**'s clinic in Las Vegas, where the boxer managed to walk approximately 45 feet in mid-January ... Former heavyweight champion **Evander Holyfield** wants the Cobb County (Georgia) Superior Court to scale down the sum he pays **Janice Itson**, the mother of one of his 11 children, because his income has decreased ... Among the **Florida Boxing Hall of Fame**'s Class of 2010 is **Gomeo Brennan**, who fought professionally from 1956 to '72. Born in the Bahamas, Brennan, 82-21-7 (38), won the British Commonwealth middleweight title but didn't get a crack at a world title until his final year as a pro, when he was knocked out in the 14th round by WBA light heavyweight titleholder **Vincente Rondon** ... The New York State Athletic Commission suspended heavyweight **Shannon Briggs**, 38, for 90 days after he tested positive for a banned substance following his first-round knockout of **Marcus McGee** on December 3 ... **Rudel Obreja**, president of the Romanian Boxing Federation, has been suspended for 13 years and fined $18,000 by the International Boxing Association for breaching safety regulations ... The **Association of Boxing Commissions** has ruled that the results of future bouts held at the Isleta Native-American reservation in New Mexico will be listed as "non-supervised" fights. The action was taken because the **Isleta Athletic Commission** failed to comply with the ABC's request to provide a copy of the tribal resolution creating the commission and a copy of the rules and regulations governing boxing events held on the Isleta reservation ... Retired boxer **Shawn O'Sullivan**, who won a silver medal for his native Canada at the 1984 Olympics, said that Belleville, Ontario, police beat and Tasered him on January 19. O'Sullivan, 47, said, "They held me down and started stomping on the backs of my thighs and calves." O'Sullivan also said that the police grabbed him by the hair and slammed his head into a wooden post. Police, however, claimed O'Sullivan was drunk, combative, and resisted arrest ... Undefeated Manchester, Connecticut, featherweight **Matt Remillard**, 20-0 (11), was arrested by state police on January 5 and charged with assault in the second degree, breach of peace/threatening, and criminal mischief. **Brett Hallenbeck**, Remillard's manager, claimed that Matt was defending himself during a fight that led to his arrest ... Former WBO super featherweight titleholder **Jorge "La Hiena" Barrios**, 33, has been arrested and charged with vehicular manslaughter after being involved in an accident in Mar del Plata, Argentina. According to media reports, Barrios ran a red light in his BMW X5 truck, struck another car, and forced it into the path of seven pedestrians, injuring six and killing **Yamila Vanesa**, who was six months pregnant. Barrios then fled the scene, hitting another car as he sped away. Seven hours later, the boxer turned himself in to authorities ... WBO light heavyweight titleholder **Jurgen Brahmer** was sentenced to 16 months in prison for an alleged assault that caused bodily injury in a bar incident ... Trainer **Murphy Griffith**, 88, died in late-January. He was best known for training **Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini** ... Dutch promoter/manager **Henk Ruhling**, 86, died in the Netherlands on January 1. Ruhling guided fighters such as **Rudy Koopsman**, **Alex Blanchard**, **Nordin Ben Salad**, **Fighting Mack**, **Eddy Smulders**, and **Rudi Lubbers**, who fought **Muhammad Ali** in 1973 ... **Miguel Cotto Sr.**, the father of welterweight contender **Miguel Cotto**, died of a heart attack on January 3 in Puerto Rico. He was 57.

PHOTO BY SANKEI/GETTY IMAGES

Hasegawa: Japan's Fighter of the Year



Brennan: Inducted into Florida HOF

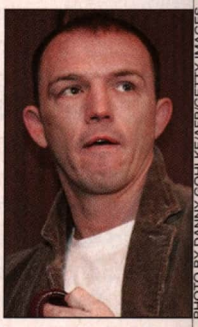


PHOTO BY DANNY GOHLKE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Brahmer: Sentenced to 16 months

Quotable

"I was a cocaine addict first and a boxer second ... I did fight several fights while under the control of cocaine. I liked cocaine."

—Former WBA heavyweight titleholder Tony Tubbs during his pre-sentencing evaluation on drug charges.

"I do not mind admitting I was gutted at the way Amir Khan and his team brought our partnership to an end after five years and 25 fights together. These days, it seems loyalty is a quality bestowed in very few sportsmen."

—Promoter Frank Warren commenting on Khan's decision to leave him and fight for Golden Boy Promotions

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended January 24, 2010

Heavyweights: No changes.
Cruiserweights: No changes.
Light Heavyweights: No changes.
Super Middleweights: No changes.
Middleweights: Anthony Mundine (seventh last issue) switches places with David Lopez (sixth last issue) based on activity. Roman Karmazin comes in at 10, replacing the inactive Winky Wright.
Junior Middleweights: No changes.
Welterweights: No changes.
Junior Welterweights: No changes.
Lightweights: No changes.
Junior Lightweights: Takashi Uchiyama comes in at seven after scoring a 12-round TKO over Juan Carlos Salgado (seven last issue), who drops to eight. Uchiyama's entrance forces down Jorge Linares (eighth last issue) and Vitali Tajbert (ninth last issue) one place each and forces out Ji Hoon Kim at 10.
Featherweights: Juan Manuel Lopez makes a splashing debut, coming in at two after stopping Steven Luevano (second last issue) in seven rounds. Yuriorkis Gamboa (10th last issue) rises to seven, based on his one-sided drubbing of Roger Mtagwa, pushing down Martin Honorio (seventh last issue) to eight. To make room for Lopez, Ryol Li Lee (eighth last issue) comes out, while Luevano sinks to five. The reshuffling also drops Rocky Juarez (fifth last issue), who is 1-2-1 over his last four fights, to 10.
Junior Featherweights: Juan Manuel Lopez (third last issue) is now a featherweight. Lopez' exit stimulates movement, as everyone rated four through 10 moves up one place each, and makes room for Satoshi Hosono to debut at 10.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior Bantamweights: No changes.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior Flyweights: The division experiences a shakeup when Carlos Tamara stops Brian Viloria (first last issue) to annex the IBF belt. Tamara's upset victory enables him to debut at three, while Giovanni Segura (second last issue) moves to the top spot and Rodel Mayol (third last issue) moves into the number-two position. Viloria's defeat drops him to five, pushing down everyone rated five to nine one place each and forcing out Cesar Canchila from 10.
Strawweights: Milan Melindo (fifth last issue) moved up to flyweight, which allows everyone ranked from six to 10 last issue to advance one place each. Melindo's exit also opens room for Yasutaka Kuroki to slide into the 10 slot.
Pound-for pound: No changes.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Welter/Welterweight
2. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
3. **Shane Mosley**
   Welterweight
4. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
6. **Nonito Donaire**
   Junior Bantamweight
7. **Miguel Cotto**
   Welterweight
8. **Celestino Caballero**
   Junior Featherweight
9. **Chad Dawson**
   Light Heavyweight
10. **Paul Williams**
    Middleweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to
ringtv.com

[The Ring Ratings]

For Period Ended January 24, 2010

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

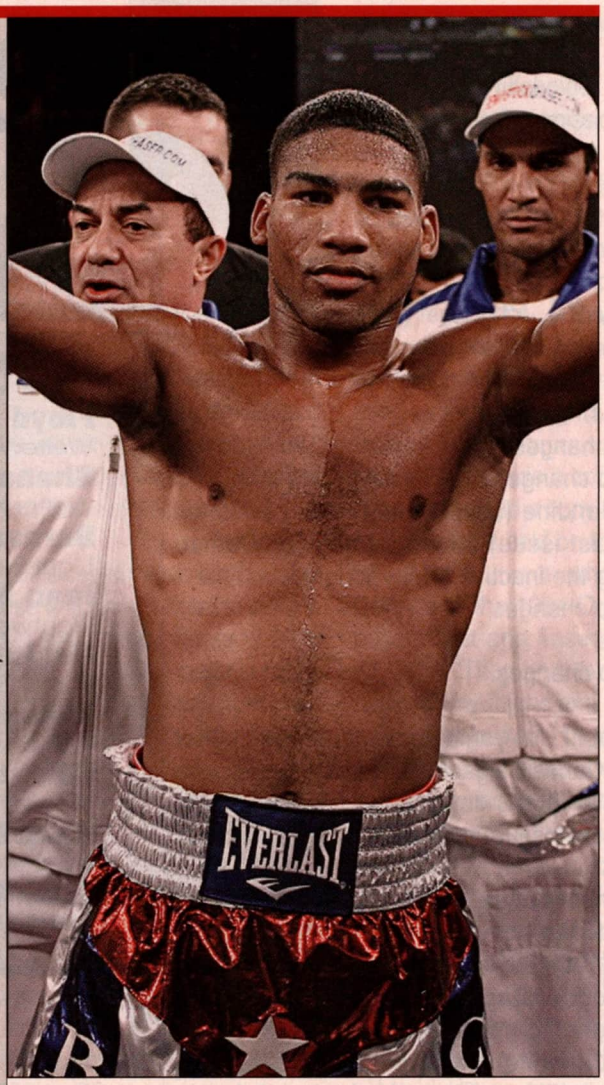


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Yuriorkis Gamboa jumped to seventh at featherweight after easily dispatching Rogers Mtagwa

Heavyweights
Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 53-3 (47)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 39-2 (37)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 18-0 (13)
3. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-1 (18)
4. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 25-1-1 (17)
5. **DAVID HAYE**
England 23-1 (21)
6. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 28-1 (25)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 29-1 (19)
10. **TONY THOMPSON**
Washington, D.C. 33-2 (21)

Jr. Middleweights
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina 44-2-2 (24)
2. **CORY SPINKS**
St. Louis, MO 37-5 (11)
3. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 32-2-1 (28)
4. **DEANDRE LATIMORE**
St. Louis, MO 20-2 (16)
5. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico 17-1 (14)
6. **RYAN RHODES**
England 43-4 (29)
7. **YURI FOREMAN**
Belarus 28-0 (8)
8. **JOACHIM ALCINE**
Canada 32-1 (19)
9. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
Armenia 27-0 (17)
10. **ZAURBEK BAYSANGUROV**
Russia 23-1 (17)

Featherweights
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 43-0-2 (22)
2. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 28-0 (25)
3. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
Mexico 39-11-2 (23)
4. **JORGE SOLIS**
Mexico 37-2-2 (27)
5. **STEVEN LUEVANO**
La Puente, CA 37-2-1 (15)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO**
Puerto Rico 21-1-1 (14)
7. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba 17-0 (15)
8. **MARTIN HONORIO**
Mexico 27-4-1 (14)
9. **ELIO ROJAS**
Dominican Republic 21-1 (13)
10. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 28-5-1 (20)

Jr. Featherweights
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama 33-2 (23)
2. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM**
Thailand 40-1 (28)
3. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 35-4-3 (22)
4. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada 31-1 (12)
5. **BERNARD DUNNE**
Ireland 28-2 (15)
6. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 36-2-2 (23)
7. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
South Africa 23-2-2 (13)
8. **ANTONIO ESCALANTE**
Mexico 22-2 (14)
9. **RENDALL MUNROE**
England 20-1 (8)
10. **SATOSHI HOSONO**
Japan 16-1 (12)

Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 28-2 (12)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama 28-1-1 (10)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO**
Ukraine 21-2-2 (7)
4. **YONNHY PEREZ**
Colombia 20-0 (14)
5. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana 27-2 (22)
6. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
Venezuela 19-0 (11)
7. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 22-3 (18)
8. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico 19-0 (12)
9. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 39-3-1 (29)
10. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
Russia 24-0 (11)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: TOMASZ ADAMEK
Poland 39-1 (27)

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 22-2 (11)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 41-2-1 (31)
3. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 31-0 (17)
4. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 27-1 (20)
5. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 26-2-1 (10)
6. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 26-1-1 (19)
7. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 23-1 (16)
8. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 28-3 (25)
9. **MATT GODFREY**
Providence, RI 20-1 (10)
10. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 14-2-3 (6)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 29-0 (17)
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 50-5-1 (32)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 49-13-2 (33)
4. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 27-6 (19)
5. **JEAN PASCAL**
Haiti 25-1 (16)
6. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 20-0 (18)
7. **YUSAF MACK**
Philadelphia, PA 28-2-2 (17)
8. **VYACHESLAV UZELKOV**
Ukraine 22-0 (14)
9. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 26-2 (15)
10. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 20-0 (12)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 25-0 (20)
2. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 21-0 (13)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 26-0 (21)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 42-2 (32)
5. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-3-2 (19)
6. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 31-0 (25)
7. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 29-1 (20)
8. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 28-3 (21)
9. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 37-2 (23)
10. **EDUARD GUTKNECHT**
Kazakhstan 18-0 (7)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK
Youngstown, OH 36-1 (32)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 33-2-1 (14)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 38-1 (27)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 32-3 (15)
4. **KHOREN GEVOR**
Armenia 31-4 (16)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 26-2 (18)
6. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 38-3 (23)
7. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 38-12 (23)
8. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 22-1 (13)
9. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 28-0 (10)
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN**
Russia 40-3-1 (26)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 50-3-2 (38)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 46-5 (39)
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 40-0 (25)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 34-2 (27)
5. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Ghana 35-3 (20)
6. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 37-6 (27)
7. **ANDRE BERTO**
Winter Haven, FL 25-0 (19)
8. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 30-4 (15)
9. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
Poland 35-8-1 (18)
10. **JAN ZAVECK**
Slovenia 28-1 (16)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 50-3-2 (38)

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
Palm Springs, CA 25-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN**
England 22-1 (16)
3. **RICKY HATTON**
England 45-2 (32)
4. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
St. Louis, MO 19-0 (12)
5. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
Brooklyn, NY 27-3 (5)
6. **JUAN URANGO**
Colombia 22-2-1 (17)
7. **KENDALL HOLT**
Paterson, NJ 25-3 (13)
8. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina 27-1 (26)
9. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
Ukraine 31-3-1 (13)
10. **MIKE ALVARADO**
Denver, CO 26-0 (18)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 50-5-1 (37)

1. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 26-0 (26)
2. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
Australia 26-2 (21)
3. **ALI FUNEKA**
South Africa 30-2-3 (25)
4. **ROLANDO REYES**
Mexico 31-4-2 (20)
5. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 25-3 (12)
6. **ANTHONY PETERSON**
Washington, DC 29-0 (19)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
Namibia 25-0 (17)
8. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
Venezuela 26-3-2 (20)
9. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
Mexico 23-1-1 (17)
10. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 35-2-1 (17)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico 50-7-2 (32)
2. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
Gilroy, CA 25-1-1 (17)
3. **MZONKE FANA**
South Africa 29-4 (12)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico 23-0-1 (14)
5. **MALCOLM KLASSEN**
South Africa 24-5-2 (15)
6. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
South Africa 37-4-1 (19)
7. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan 14-0 (11)
8. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
Mexico 21-1-1 (15)
9. **JORGE LINARES**
Venezuela 27-1 (18)
10. **VITALI TAJBERT**
Kazakhstan 19-1 (6)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Armenia 33-2-1 (27)
2. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 13-1-1 (8)
3. **SIMPHIWE NONGQAYI**
South Africa 16-0 (6)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 30-6-2 (22)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 34-3 (27)
6. **KOHEI KONO**
Japan 24-4 (8)
7. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines 22-1 (14)
8. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
Japan 15-2 (11)
9. **DAIGO NAKAHIRO**
Japan 21-2-1 (8)
10. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
Philippines 18-0-1 (14)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 22-0 (14)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 74-3-1 (39)
3. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
Thailand 48-1-1 (20)
4. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 35-3-3 (22)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 30-0-2 (19)
6. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 35-5-2 (16)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
South Africa 25-2 (16)
8. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
Panama 19-1 (14)
9. **ZOLANI TETE**
South Africa 12-0 (11)
10. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
Mexico 30-5-1 (23)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 33-0-1 (6)

1. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
Mexico 22-1-1 (18)
2. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 26-4-1 (20)
3. **CARLOS TAMARA**
Colombia 21-4 (15)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 37-6 (21)
5. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 26-3 (15)
6. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 29-2-2 (20)
7. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina 22-1 (12)
8. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
Philippines 14-0 (8)
9. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 28-3-1 (11)
10. **JUANITO RUBILLAR**
Philippines 47-13-7 (23)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua 24-0 (20)
2. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand 33-0 (12)
3. **RAUL GARCIA**
Mexico 27-0-1 (16)
4. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
South Africa 20-0 (15)
5. **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines 26-1-3 (15)
6. **FLORANTE CONDES**
Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
7. **JUAN PALACIOS**
Nicaragua 26-3 (21)
8. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 62-8-5 (31)
9. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 23-4 (9)
10. **YASUTAKA KUROKI**
Japan 22-3-1 (14)

By Jeff Ryan

Torture Chambers?

Talk about a trade deficit. For four years now, the U.S. has been exporting heavyweight contenders to Germany to serve as punching bags for heavyweight champ Wladimir Klitschko, the Ukrainian who has become Deutschland's adopted son. The least the Germans could do is return the favor by exporting a parade of beating victims for Bernard Hopkins, Kelly Pavlik, or Shane Mosley to feast upon.

In 2006, Klitschko pulled the wings off Chris Byrd, stopping him in seven rounds in Manheim. A year later, Ray Austin fell in two rounds in Manheim, and Lamon Brewster (who'd upset Klitschko via knockout in 2004) retired after six rounds in Cologne. Then, in 2008, Tony Thompson (KO 11 in Hamburg) and former linear heavyweight titlist Hasim Rahman (KO 7 in Manheim) were roasted like Chicken Kiev.

PHOTO BY THOMAS LOHNES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ray Austin folded inside two rounds

Chambers: A tougher proposition than most U.S. exports

PHOTO BY KRAFFT ANGRER/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

So we'll forgive anyone who'll be saying extra prayers for "Fast" Eddie Chambers and wallowing in pessimism when the Philadelphian travels all the way to, yep, Dusseldorf, Germany, to challenge Klitschko on March 20. But please, no jokes about "Fast" Eddie Felson having a better chance of pulling off the upset, especially because he's so good at hitting on the break. (Sorry about that. Couldn't resist.)

Klitschko is favored and will most likely retain THE RING belt yet again. But, and it's just a hunch, "Dr. Steelhammer" might have to dig deeper into his toolbox than usual to look impressive in this one. And that's quite a change from what we've come to expect whenever Klitschko enters a German ring wearing a jockstrap and a scowl.

In Chambers, Klitschko will be facing a smart, skillful, and (here's something different for a Klitschko foe) very mobile challenger with a record of 35-1 (18). Chambers is coming off a decision victory over previously unbeaten Alexander Dimitrenko and has won five in a row since losing on points to Alexander Povetkin in 2008. The Philadelphian has a style that could give the robotic Klitschko real trouble. He possesses good lateral movement, fires quick combinations, and has a sneaky-fast hook. At 6'1" and 215 pounds, Chambers will be giving away about five-and-a-half inches and 25 pounds to the Ukrainian giant. But Chambers doesn't expect to stand and trade or wage war on the inside. If he can get past Klitschko's long arms, he'll fire and quickly retreat.

While I wouldn't go so far as to forecast the upset, it wouldn't shock me if the champion were toppled. He's getting older (Klitschko will turn 34 on March 25, Chambers 28 on March 29), has had too many easy nights in recent years, and has little left to accomplish and motivate him. Klitschko looks to me like a guy who can be outworked, and Chambers possesses the game plan and energy to outwork him.

No matter what happens on March 20, Chambers should give a far better effort during his trip to Germany than those last five train wrecks in trunks did.

B.S. Artest: In the great tradition of Ed "Too Tall" Jones, Mark Gastineau, and other pro athletes who assumed that their ability to throw a block, throw a ball, or throw a sweatsock in a laundry hamper somehow qualified them for a future as a boxer, NBA All-Star Ron Artest says he has been making plans to satisfy his own pugilistic hunger pangs.

"In four years, I'm going to try to have my first fight," the Los Angeles Lakers forward told *The Sporting News*. "If I get knocked out, I ain't boxing no more. Just three or four fights, that's it. Just to say I did it."

Artest: Cruising for a bruising

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from a fight that was scrapped to a city that's fighting for scraps:

PHOTO BY JEFF VESPA/WIREIMAGES

Wladimir and Panettiere (far left) pose with philanthropist Diana Jenkins

• Even an eternal pessimist like me still believes that a Pacquiao-Mayweather bout will unfold sometime within a year, assuming that neither superhero loses in the interim. (With all that money to be made, it's hard to imagine stubbornness putting a permanent end to such an eagerly anticipated megafight.) And now the matchup has the one ingredient it had been previously lacking: bad blood.

• Tomasz Adamek should either a) remain at cruiserweight, where he can strive to become the greatest champion in that division's modest history and, hopefully, secure a fight with either Hopkins or rematch with Chad Dawson, or b) take on a *legitimate* heavyweight, not a worn-out Andrew Golota or limited Jason Estrada.

• The gossip wire has been sizzling with reports of a romance between Wladimir Klitschko and actress Hayden Panettiere. This one seems like a real mismatch, not just because of the 17-inch height difference between the two, but because Klitschko is at the top of his profession and Panettiere is to acting what Chris Arreola is to Spartan training regimens.

• I've always been a fan of stadium boxing for two reasons: One, the Sweet Science has a great tradition of staging title bouts in ballparks like Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds, Soldier Field, Tiger Stadium, Comiskey Park, and the Orange Bowl. And two, stadiums create a unique atmosphere on fight night: Stars fighting under the stars. So it was great to see Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey land in Cowboys Stadium in Texas, one of the sites originally considered for Pacquiao-Mayweather.

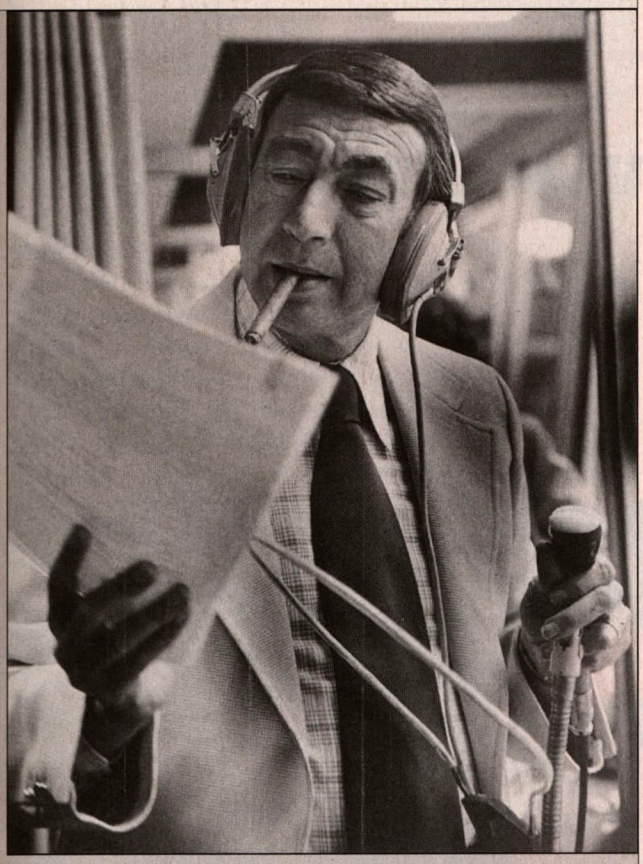
• Cowboys Stadium, like its predecessor, Texas Stadium, was built with an opening in its roof. The old joke was that the place was constructed that way so that God could look down and watch his favorite team play. Well, when "Pac-Man" climbs through the ropes in the new joint, God will now have a chance to watch his favorite fighter.

The immensely unlikable Artest, as you may know, is a guy who has played for five different teams in 11 seasons. He recently revealed that he hid booze in his locker and drank at halftime of games early in his career. And he was the catalyst for one of the ugliest incidents in NBA history, when he and some of his Indiana Pacers teammates brawled with Detroit Pistons fans during a game in 2004. Though Artest stands 6'7" and weighs 245 pounds, he didn't exactly look like a future pro fighter on that night. When Detroit enforcer Ben Wallace put up his dukes and challenged him, Artest backpedaled so fast that he made Paulie Malignaggi look like Smokin' Joe Frazier.

You've got to love Artest's naiveté/stupidity. He wants to box "just to say I did it," as though we're talking about entering a hot dog-eating contest or singing karaoke. Did it dawn on him that by the time he embarks on his new career, he'd be an ancient 34 years old? Now, we know that heavyweights develop late, but come on.

One wonders what the sport's big men are saying when they read of Artest's intentions. (Besides, of course, "Let me at this clown!") My colleagues at the keyboard can probably relate to some degree to what they're feeling. Those of us who write for a living periodically run into egomaniacs that have no writing skills or training and have never been published, yet talk as though they're a cross between Frank Deford and James Patterson. They're going to write a novel one day, or publish their memoirs, or sell an article to a magazine, or land a columnists' gig. It could be a brother, a sister, an uncle, a neighbor, or a drunk at a St. Patrick's Day parade. It doesn't matter. They all spout off, insulting the true professionals by assuming that informing/entertaining/provoking a reader with the written word is an easy thing to do. Trust me, it's not.

Neither is facing a professional fighter if you have no experience, no matter how muscular you may be or how tough you think you are. None of the Hemingways-in-their-



Cosell is finally heading to Canastota

• A recent report indicated that Atlantic City staged 145 boxing cards in 1985, but just five in 2009. Geez, is the diving fighter going the way of the diving horse?

• It's about time Howard Cosell made it to Canastota. What the hell took so long? "Humble Howard" should have been enshrined the same day the great Don Dunphy was.

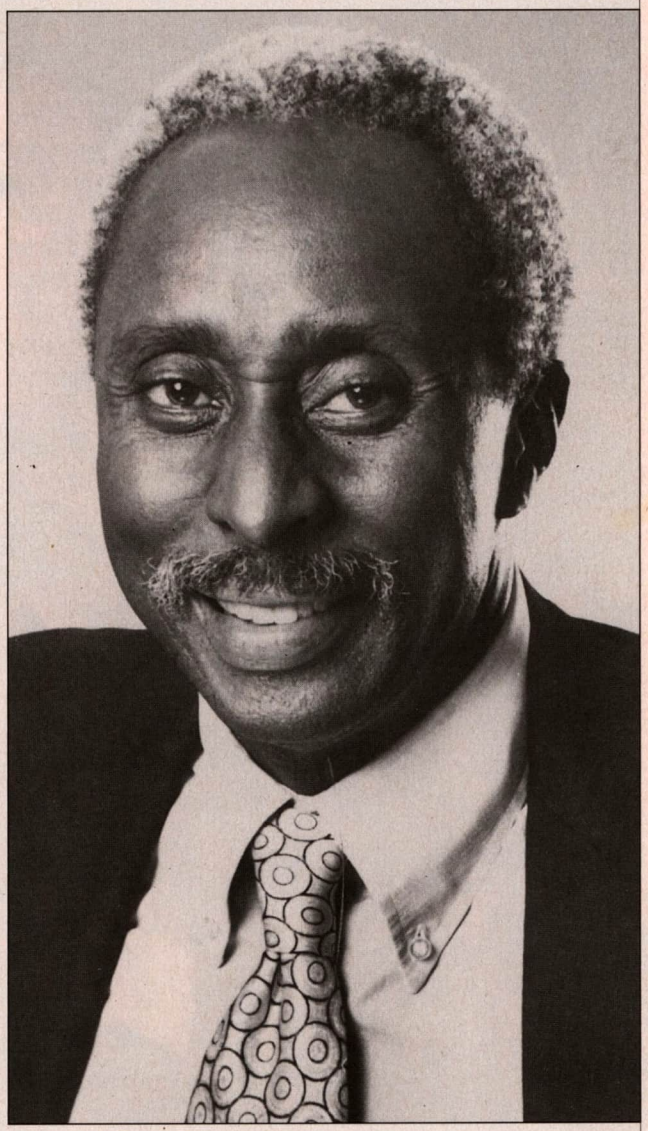
own-minds that I've encountered, by the way, have ever written a damn thing to this day. And no goon from another sport has ever made the transition to boxing successfully either.

Rust Never Slept: In January, Art Rust Jr. died at the age of 82 of complications from Parkinson's disease. Unless you've lived in the New York area within the past 40 years, there's a good chance that you've never heard of Rust. If so, that's too bad, for he was a lifelong friend of the fight game. And in the mainstream media, friends of the fight game aren't exactly in great supply.

Rust worked for a while as a TV sportscaster, but was primarily a radio voice who reached the peak of his career in the 80s, when he hosted *Sportstalk* on New York's most powerful AM station, the legendary WABC. Although Rust's show was often the lead-in for New York Yankees games, and he served an audience of rabid Mets, Jets, Giants, Knicks, Nets, Rangers, Islanders, and Devils fanatics, he devoted countless hours of airtime to boxing. Whereas today, a mainstream sports show on talk radio might spend 20 minutes on a superfight like Pacquiao-Mayweather, highlighted by an obligatory phone interview with a TV analyst, Rust spent days building interest in bouts like Holmes-Cooney or Leonard-Hagler and paraded an army of fighters and experts through his studio or his set-up at the fight site.

As a guest on *Sportstalk*, your intrepid columnist discovered that Rust was a no-baloney interviewer. He didn't serve cupcake questions to make his panelists look smart. He hit them with offbeat stuff that tested their true insight and kept them on edge. And when it came to boxing, Rust, unlike many radio hosts, knew of what he spoke. He and his wife, Edna, even collaborated on the 1978 autobiography, *Joe Louis: My Life*.

There will never be another Art Rust Jr. because no radio producer would allow one to exist. Imagine wasting all that time on the Sweet Science when there are so many fantasy baseball trades to propose and controversial clipping-penalty calls to debate ad nauseum. ■



Boxing lost a good friend when Rust died

By Ivan Goldman

Did Mayweather Duck Gender Test?

Teddy Atlas' anonymous source claimed he saw incriminating email messages from Manny Pacquiao's camp practically confessing to the use of performance-enhancing drugs. But what if I told you I have a source who told me Floyd Mayweather's people were worried their fighter might not make it past a *gender* test? Who cares about steroids and related chemicals when the other guy might be a damn *girl*, for crying out loud? At least according to my source.

Yup, you guessed it. I'm kidding. But my story is practically as believable as Atlas'. Remember, Pacquiao is suing the Mayweathers for defamation. And the emails were supposedly sent to their camp. If they had that kind of evidence, don't you think they'd use it to defend themselves? Heck, they'd send copies around to every news outlet in the solar system.

Yet Atlas, who seems to really believe in the existence of these phantom emails, either accepted his source's fabricated

Why is Atlas spreading unsubstantiated rumors?

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

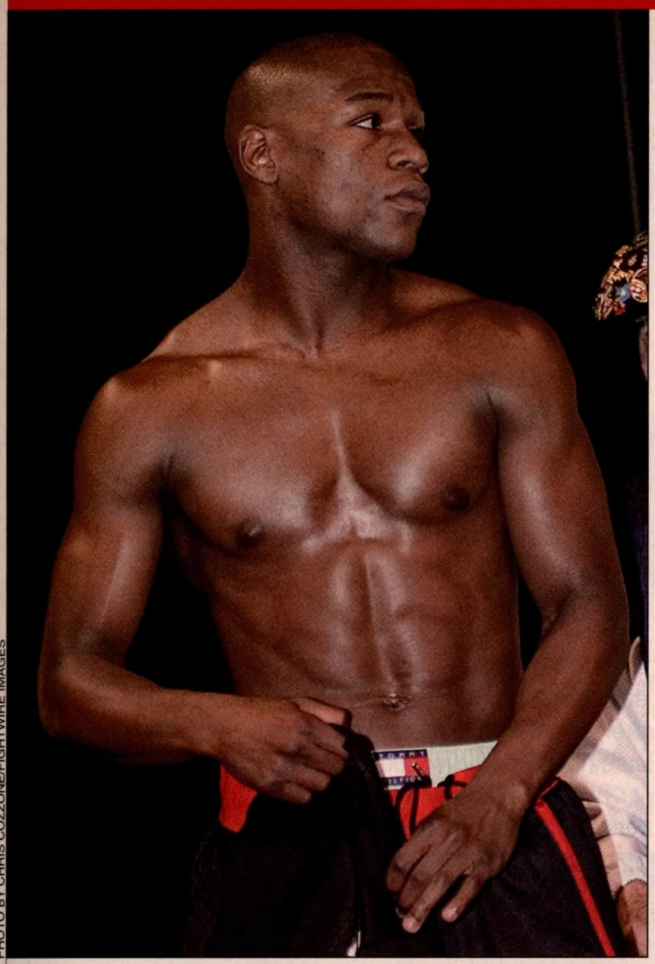


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Gender test! What gender test?

excuse for not producing them or he was too lame to ask to see them. I will now pause while you catch your breath … Yes, I'm daring to question the investigative skills and instincts of living legend Teddy Atlas, the fabled fistic analyst and venerable trainer to the stars. Why? Because there's no free lunch for universally beloved boxing icons when they relay fishy accusations all over national TV.

Not even O.J., who left more clues than the Nigerian underpants bomber, was dumb enough to leave a written trail. Maybe that's how offenders do it on cop shows, but not in real life. A boxing trainer wouldn't have to know this. A responsible journalist would. Tim Smith of the *New York Daily News* also repeated an anonymous claim that Pacquiao's team asked incriminating questions, but he didn't mention the existence of emails.

Atlas, while denying he was accusing Pac-Man of juicing, also claimed that the "man in the street" wonders why Pacquiao, if he had nothing to hide, wouldn't just give in to Mayweather's demands. Personally, I'd love to know just how many men in the street wondered this aloud to Atlas, but here's the answer anyway: Because Pacquiao's nobody's bitch.

Just for the sake of argument, what if the pride of the Philippines were to actually demand that Mayweather take a gender test? "We're not saying you're a girl, exactly, just that, I don't know, there's a lot of talk going around, so drop your pants." We all know what "Money" would do, because he's nobody's bitch either. Atlas ought to understand you can't let opponents pull mind games like that, getting you under their control even before you step in the ring.

The Mayweathers' "proof" that Pacquiao cheated seems to be that in the course of his career he moved all the way from junior fly to welterweight, stayed strong, and kept winning. What they don't tell you is that Manny's first recorded pro fight took place January 22, 1995, just one month after his 16th birthday. Floyd debuted at 130 pounds at age 20 after a busy, rigorous amateur career, giving him plenty more time to grow and mature. And he wasn't subsisting on Pacquiao's Third World diet.

Anyway, here we sit picking our teeth with the last of our radioactive toothpicks as we sit in the thermonuclear rubble of what should have been the greatest match-up since the first Sugar Ray Leonard-Tommy Hearns fight. How did it disintegrate so quickly and terribly?

I don't think anyone can really answer that. Floyd Junior killed this fight, but I'm not sure even he knows why. Maybe he just let his big mouth get the best of him. Pac-Man had agreed to blood tests, including one the day after the fight, but "Money" insisted that wasn't enough. Right about now it should be dawning on him that a fight offering a $3-million purse requires just as much training effort as the $30-million fight he foolishly ducked. Most likely he's also realizing that Pacquiao's lawsuit against him is no joke.

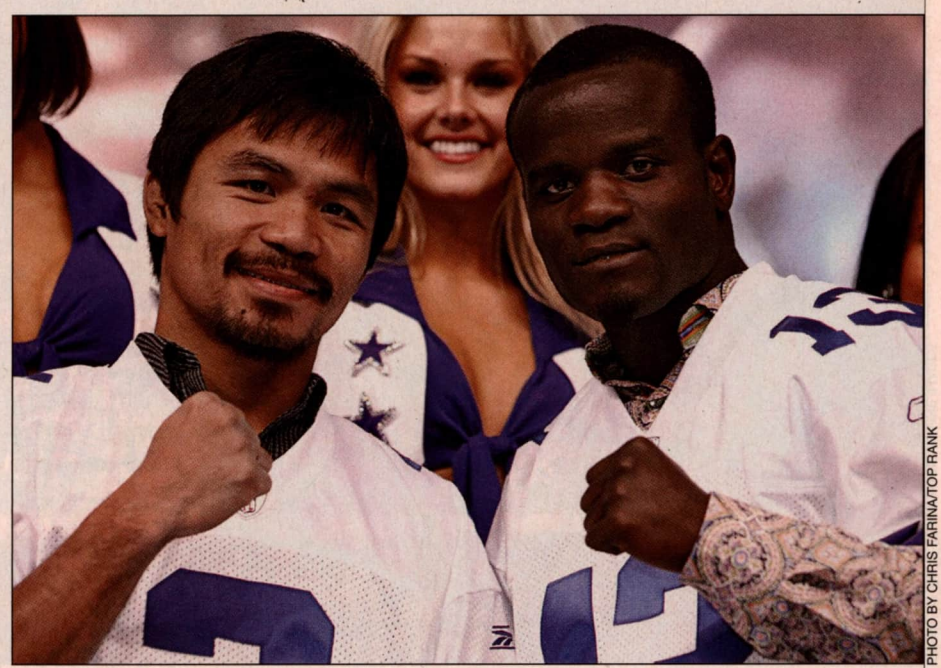


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pacquiao-Clottey is a worthy match

If both fighters keep winning, you don't need a crystal ball to see Mayweather's craving for cash should eventually overcome his fear of defeat and the match will get made later. Meanwhile, Pacquiao versus Joshua Clottey is an excellent fight, and Mayweather versus Shane Mosley has a sweet, long-anticipated sound—as long as we don't have to see any more episodes of Floyd Junior making love to his currency on HBO's *24/7*.

About Steroids: Different sports are dealing with them in very different ways. The NFL stance, for example, is to assign three monkeys to not see, hear, or speak of the extra fifty pounds of muscle linemen added over the last four decades. Boxing does better, but experts tell us that because of sophisticated new masking agents, urine tests no longer suffice. The commissions need to get together with experts and formulate a 21st century policy that makes sense.

King's Mangled Facts: Our February issue presented an article that focused on Don King's plan to return to the glory days when he was the Number One promoter in the sport. An interesting topic, nicely written by colleague David Mayo. And pertinent. After all, King was once a very dominant presence, he's still around, lots of decent people do business with him, and he has a right to present his view.

But when you give King a forum and treat him as you might treat anyone else it presents a problem. Because King isn't like anyone else. He's a liar, a cheat, and also, the record shows, a convicted killer. He runs over interviewers with extended, earsplitting raps chock-full of fiction and mangled facts. They spill out with such velocity and volume it's impossible to speak over his vocal artillery. Mayo quoted other people in the story, but everyone avoided dealing with what sits at the rotten core of King's fictional claims.

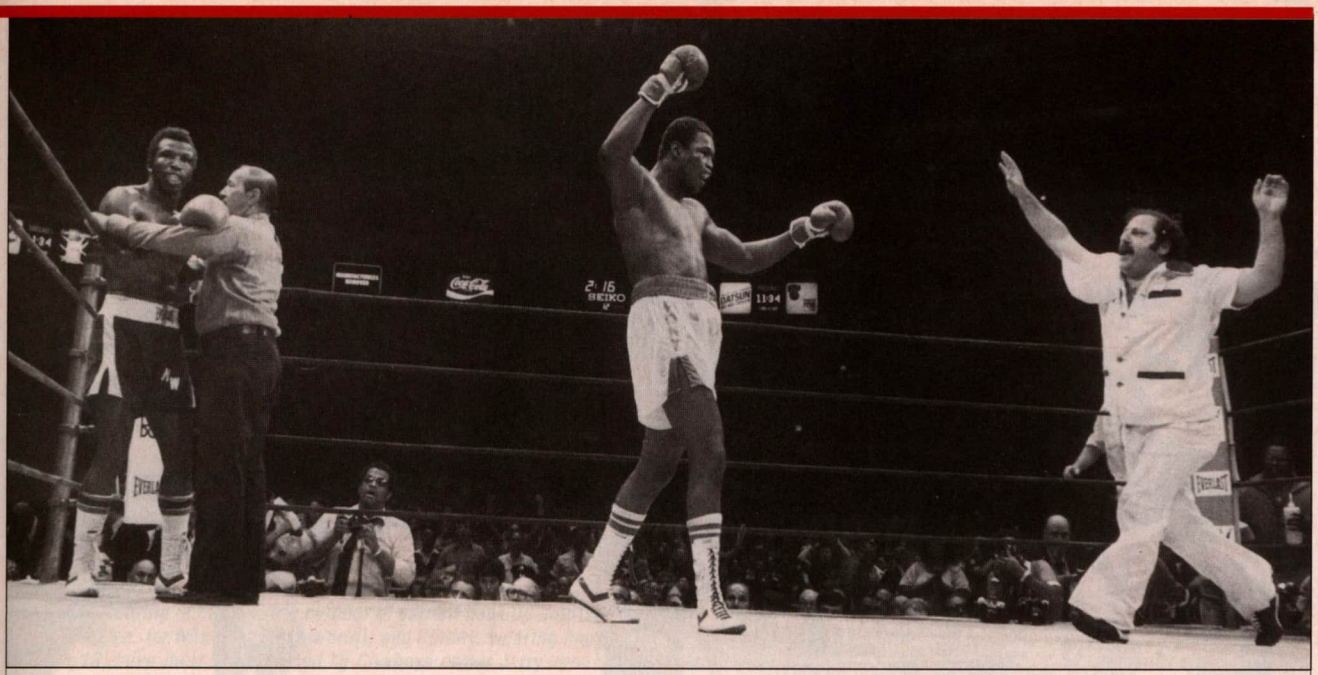
One particular section of his rant cries out for correction. King bragged that in 1979 he turned down $800,000 from ABC-TV for the rights to Larry Holmes versus Mike Weaver, leaving him free to accept a much lower $125,000 bid from HBO. The deal apparently put HBO into the boxing business. King, in the retelling, said his motive was to induce more network competition and implied he foresaw what a powerful force this infant cable medium might become.

Okay, first of all, the promoter has a fiduciary responsibility to his fighters, whose purses would clearly suffer from such a terrible financial choice. It would lay ground for lawsuits, a sanity hearing, and possibly criminal prosecution. But most likely it never happened, at least not the way King tells it. For sure he skipped over some incredibly damaging facts.

Two years earlier, ABC had to drop a much-advertised, King-organized boxing tournament right in the middle of the

PHOTO BY JAVIEL CENTENO/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

King's credibility questioned ... yet again



Trainer Richie Giachetti rushed to congratulate Holmes following TKO of Weaver

competition because it was discovered it was saturated with fixed judges, fixed ratings, fictional records, kickbacks, and other forms of corruption. ABC still did business with King for a while, but the fixed tournament had dealt the sport a near-fatal blow. It turned off fans and sports editors and convinced broadcast networks to gradually disengage from boxing. The Holmes-Weaver bout took place during that disengagement period.

The introduction of closed-circuit TV was already removing the biggest fights from widespread viewing. The broadcasters' exit took away the rest. New generations of kids without access to cable or the wherewithal to attend closed-circuit shows followed what sports were available to them, and boxing became what we now call a niche sport. King's crooked tournament also corrupted staffers for *Sports Illustrated* and the magazine you're holding. (THE RING subsequently changed owners, and no one who worked here then remains on staff.) When THE RING ratings proved untrustworthy, alphabet gangs moved in with their own corrupt ratings systems (The ratings we've since reinstated, are, take it from me, clean).

Cable networks took up with the discredited sport of boxing because they couldn't get deals to show football, basketball, or baseball. We're now blessed with excellent cable fights, but getting kicked off the broadcast networks was not some glory to be celebrated. Thanks to the changing technological spectrum of TV delivery systems, broadcast channels have no clear upper hand anymore, but the damage has been done.

In the article, King complained he has trouble making deals with HBO and Showtime these days because "I can't be controlled, I can't be intimidated." As though he were a whistle-blower, a champion of integrity standing up for the little guy against the big bad bullies. Give me a break.

King, doing business the same old way, still steers fighters over to his "manager" son Carl, so they can slice and dice bigger chunks off their purses. The list of fighters he's been caught cheating includes Holmes, Mike Tyson, Tim Witherspoon, Muhammad Ali, and Terry Norris. King settled with all of them. Tyson, his biggest pigeon, settled for $14-million, but he figured King had fleeced him for $100 million.

King's damage hasn't been exclusively financial. Impressionable young Iron Mike, by allowing King to run his professional life, decided that he didn't need to train properly or have people of substance in his corner anymore, and a brilliant heavyweight career went off the tracks.

If King showed remorse for any of his carnage then I might not feel obligated to point out these facts. He might even be eligible for forgiveness. He doesn't, and he isn't. ■

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

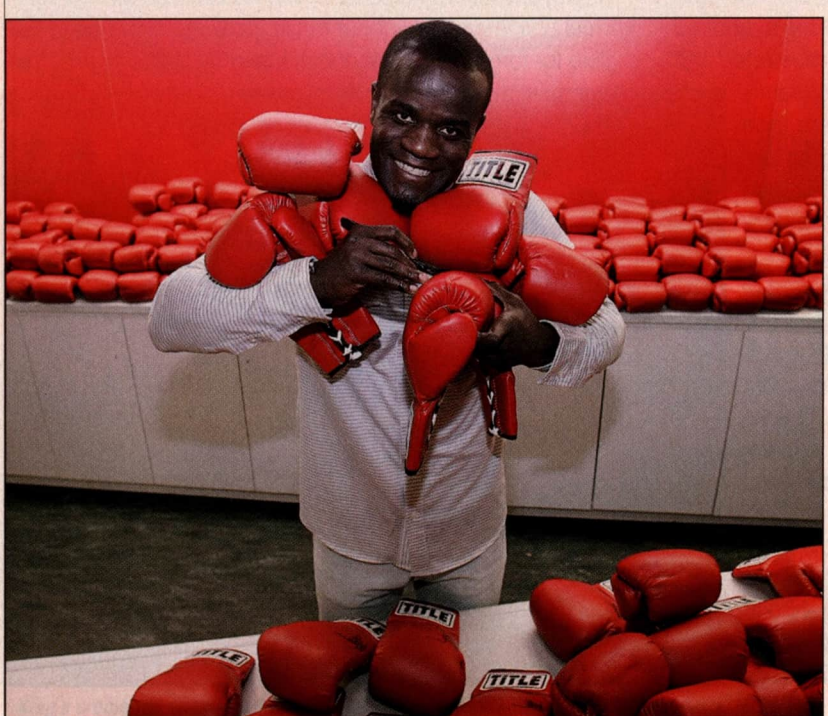
Norris won a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against King

[Camera Clicks]

Special Pacquiao-Clottey Press Conference Edition

PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Here's the photo Jinkee Pacquiao doesn't want to see: Manny making his entrance at the Cowboys Stadium press conference to announce his fight with Joshua Clottey, eying up the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders one by one. No word on whether Manny convinced his wife to put on a Cowboys cheerleader outfit when he got home.



Training camp must feel like a breeze compared to the arduous task of signing all these boxing gloves. In order to get into the fighting frame of mind, Clottey signs with a tireless work rate for three minutes straight, then takes a one-minute break (putting an Enswell on his right hand), then resumes signing.

Can you tell which one of these guys has a reputation for being superstitious? Probably not the guy with number 13 on his back. Pacquiao, wearing number 3 (the number of current back-up quarterback Jon Kitna, for whatever that's worth), and Clottey, wearing lucky number 13, have their hands raised by Cowboys owner Jerry Jones. It wasn't easy, but Jones managed to lift the fighters' hands even higher than his face has been lifted.

Quick—which one is the welterweight and which one gained fame as a bantamweight? Okay, so Paulie Ayala has packed on a few pounds since retiring in 2004; he still looks pretty good. We have to admit, though, we're much more curious to see what Leti Ayala is looking like these days.

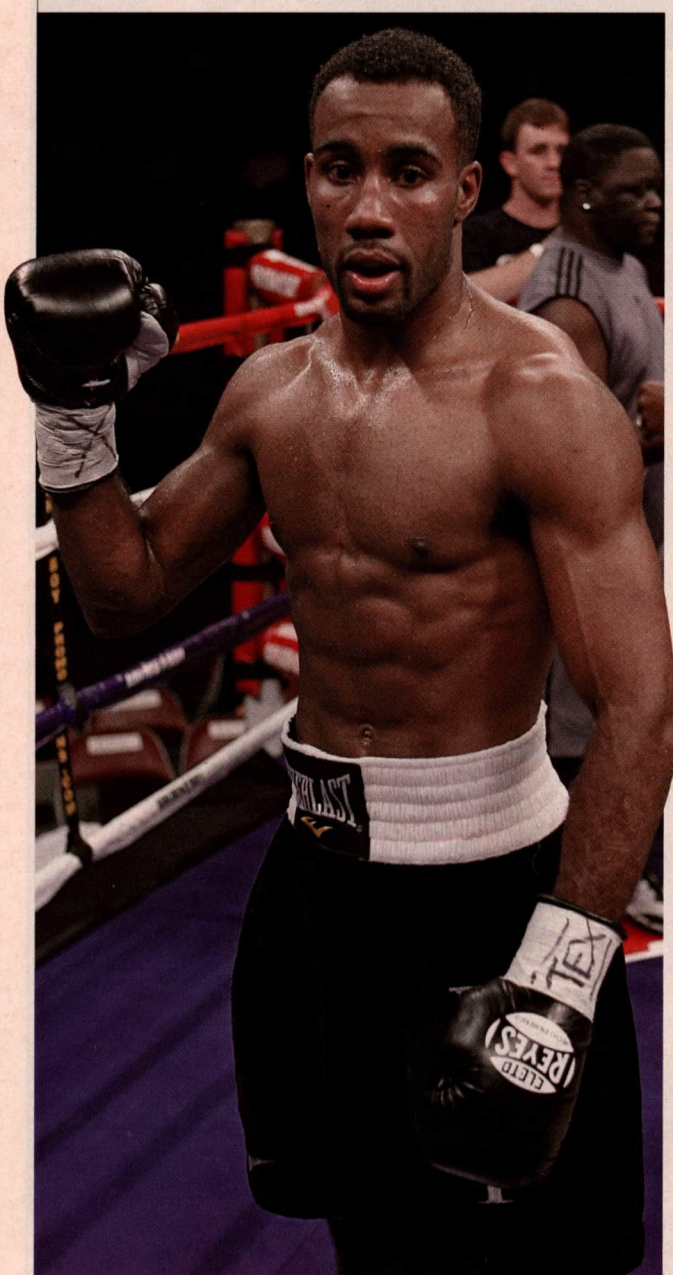
Pacquiao has truly become a larger-than-life celebrity, as evidenced by his appearance on the 160' x 70' video screen at Cowboys Stadium. You know what's going to be fun about this fight being in Dallas? When they show highlight packages to get the crowd in the mood before the main event and we get to see replays of Pacquiao knocking out Ricky Hatton on that enormous screen.

By Don Stewart
PHOTOS BY TOM HOGAN

Mickey Bey Junior Lightweight

When? Mickey Bey Jr. hears that same question each time he's back in Cleveland, Ohio. Bey always seems to run into someone who recognizes him at a store or on the street, and then it comes: *When? When are you going to bring a belt back home?*

Few cities need a champion as badly as Cleveland, a rustbelt town that was already hurting long before the current recession exploded. As of January, the unemployment rate was still in the double digits there. The city school system is in shambles. Meanwhile, not much hope has come from Cleveland's three major pro sports teams, which haven't won a title since 1964.



Can Bey, 15-0 (8), succeed where LeBron James, Brady Quinn, Grady Sizemore, and so many other Cleveland stars have failed? Bey feels it's just a matter of getting the opportunity.

"Cleveland will have a champion as soon as possible," said the 26-year-old junior lightweight, who trains in Las Vegas. "Not only a champion, but someone who is going to be on top of the boxing world for a long time and who is going to bring a lot of excitement."

For Bey and his team, there is no talk of "next year" or "a few fights down the road." Trainer Jeff Mayweather, manager Cameron Dunkin, and promoter Chet Koerner feel their man is ready to face the world's top 135 pounders right now. They get no disagreements from Bey, whose hunger is more like full-blown starvation. "I'm past due," he said. "I'm ready in 20 minutes."

Given his city's recent history of sports agony, it's only fitting that Bey's career has been marred by frustration, bad breaks, and missed opportunities. A crowd-pleasing 5'9" orthodox boxer-puncher, Bey emerged as the U.S. featherweight representative after the 2004 Olympic Box-Offs in Cleveland. That's where the plan flew off course.

Bey came down with pneumonia two weeks later, just as the U.S. team arrived in Tijuana, Mexico, for the first of two Olympic qualifying tournaments. Despite being unable to train, Bey ignored the advice of the team's doctors and entered the second and last qualifier the following month in Brazil. "That was my last shot," he said, "so I flew down there. I had to take that last shot; I couldn't give up on it."

Bey wound up fading in a 20-15 quarterfinal loss to Argentina's Daniel Brizuela. It was an embarrassment for the U.S. team, which also failed to qualify bantamweight Roberto Benitez for the Athens Games.

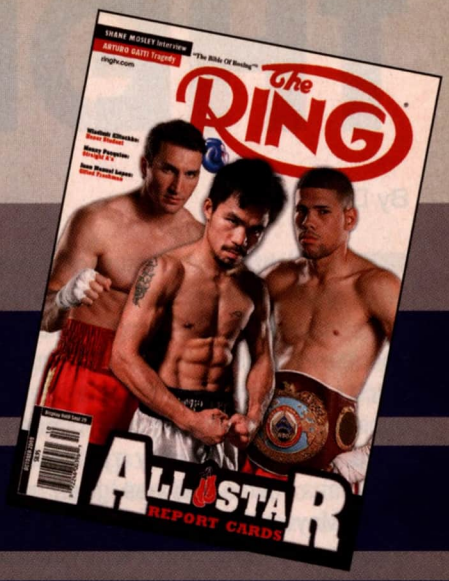
(Continued on Page 102)

Pro Record

2005		
April 29	Shane Gierke, Cleveland, OH	KO 1
July 21	Hector De La Cruz, Hollywood, CA	W 4
Oct. 1	Lamont Sims, Tampa, FL	KO 1
Dec. 17	Tomondre King, Auburn Hills, MI	W 4
2007		
Feb. 2	Odilon Rivera, Santa Ynez, CA	W 6
April 7	Michael Mendez, Springfield, MO	KO 1
June 9	Felisiberto Fernandes, Hartford, CT	KO 5
Sept. 1	Jose Magallon, Tacoma, WA	KO 6
Oct. 5	Castulo Gonzalez, Corona, CA	KO 2
2008		
Feb. 1	Roberto Acevedo, Hinckley, MN	W 8
May 17	Wilson Alcorro, Primm, NV	W 10
Oct. 24	Miguel Angel Munguia, Cabazon, CA	KO 1
2009		
Aug. 22	Rashad Ganaway, Houston, TX	W 8
Oct. 10	Michaelangelo Lynks, Houston	W 6
Dec. 19	Tyrone Wiggins, Knoxville, TN	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
15	15	0	0	8

The RING



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THE DEATH OF

By David Mayo

The Fight of the Century devolved into backbiting and sniping between old rivals, a newly raised issue that may force boxing commissions to take a long look at how they handle drug testing, a running debate over how quickly athletes recover from having blood drawn, the danger of pinpricks, the audacity of unfounded accusation, a lawsuit, failed mediation, and nary a punch thrown.

What a shame it all was, given how quickly the proposed Floyd Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao fight seemed to come together—literally, within a 10-day span, all usual sticking points were resolved—that it all fell apart in a riveting month-long spiral into nothingness.

They all pointed fingers, occasionally even at themselves, although only in a fashion that would mock the other side. Bob Arum, Pacquiao's promoter, compared himself to Neville Chamberlain negotiating with Adolf Hitler in the 1930s, in blaming himself for playing a conciliatory role with a steroid mad scientist who wouldn't listen to reason. Leonard Ellerbe, Mayweather's adviser and familiar mouthpiece, spoke effervescently about how intelligent Pacquiao's team was, only to backtrack after the deal collapsed, saying it was totally his own mistake, his own personal shortcoming, in granting unwarranted credit for wisdom.

The spinning was well under way by then and required everyone to forget that Arum's rants came despite Mayweather taking the high road in asking for enhanced drug testing by the random blood method all Olympic athletes operate under and that Ellerbe's sniping came against a Hall

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Pacquiao and Arum strike a fighting pose during media junket for Manny's 2008 fight with Oscar De La Hoya.

A SUPERFIGHT

of Famer and former attorney who has made more big fights than virtually any promoter in history (Arum) and a trainer who is a surefire Hall of Famer in his own right (Freddie Roach).

At the end of the day, the surface issue with boxing fans broke down along two lines.

On one side, Mayweather's team was completely justified in asking for the fight to be contested as cleanly as possible and in taking the position—upheld by several experts—that the urine drug testing required by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, and most other jurisdictions, is insufficient when it comes to policing all banned substances.

On the other side, Pacquiao's team was completely justified in yielding to a limited blood-testing agreement, beyond anything NSAC requires, just as long as it did not occur later than 24 days before the fight, particularly since there was absolutely no perception that the Filipino star ever used performance-enhancing drugs until Mayweather's father raised the issue last September, and Mayweather merely used it as a way to weasel out of a fight which might have scarred his undefeated record.

Performance-enhancing drugs. That's what this was all about, even if no one on Team Mayweather, save for Mayweather's father, Floyd Sr., came out and said anything as blunt as "I think Pacquiao's on steroids—that's the only thing that could explain how he carried his punch through all those weight divisions."

The closest Mayweather came to saying anything of the sort was in a radio interview when he remarked, upon being

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Adviser Leonard Ellerbe has Mayweather's ear during a Las Vegas press conference for the Juan Manuel Marquez fight.

questioned about how his physical development differed from Pacquiao's, "because we know the Philippines got the best enhancement drugs." Meantime, Ellerbe talked a lot, but in an entirely circular motion, about why the Mayweather side pressed for random blood testing.

"All we want to know, in the end, is why Pacquiao wouldn't agree to random blood testing," Ellerbe said. "It's the most accurate form of drug testing in sports today. All we want to know is why he wouldn't want to make sure the biggest fight in history isn't conducted on the most level playing field possible. Why?"

It's the very question, regardless which side one advocates, that everyone wants answered: Why?

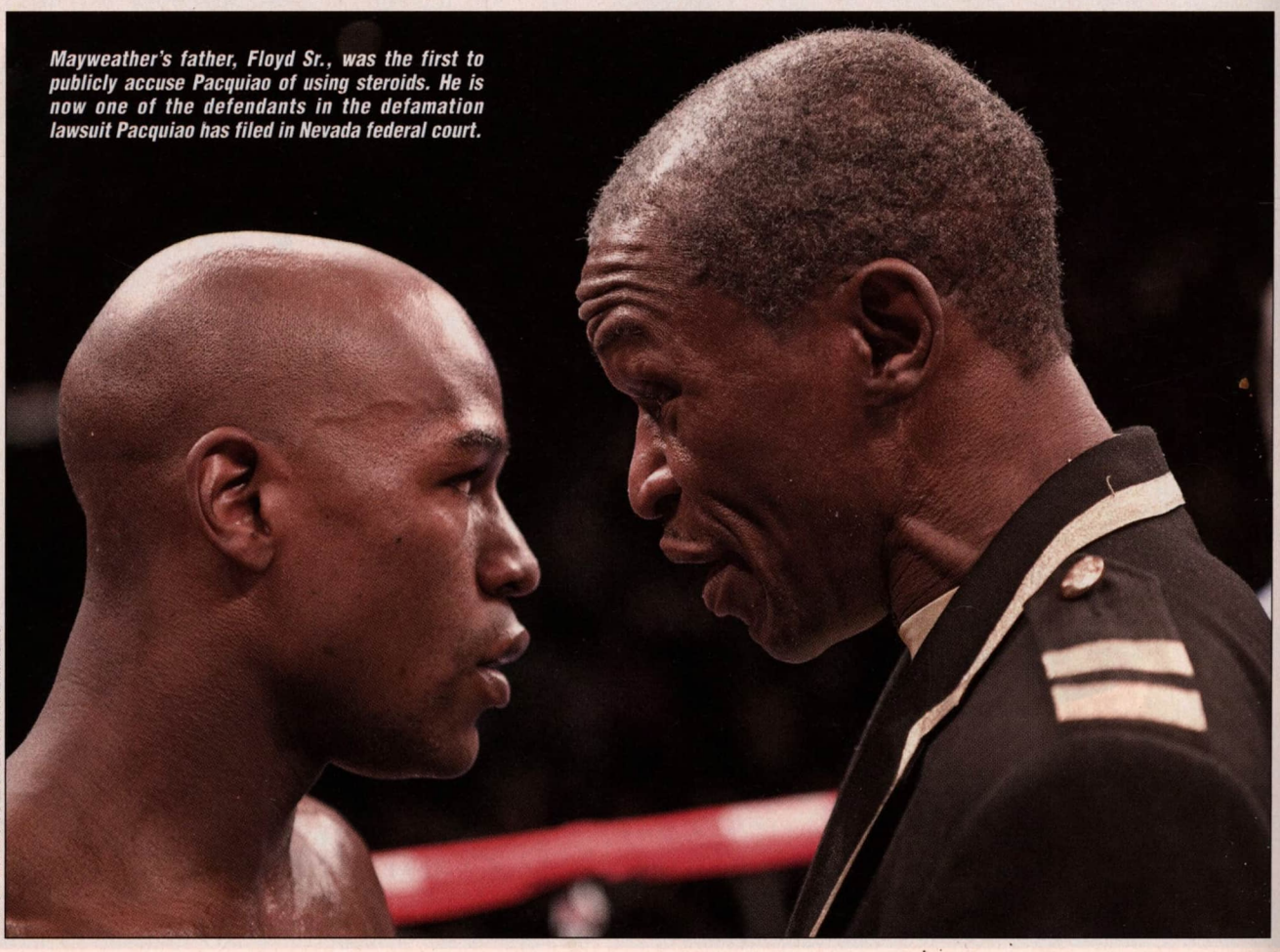
Why would Mayweather make the demand in the first place, absent hard proof? Why wouldn't Pacquiao submit to such a simple demand if he really is clean? Why wouldn't Mayweather accept Pacquiao's offer of a 24-day window, immediately preceding fight night, in which there would be no blood testing, in the interest of salvaging weeks of negotiations and the integrity of boxing? Why didn't Pacquiao, in light of Mayweather accepting an absurd contractual clause for a $10 million-per-pound penalty if either fighter failed to make the 147-pound limit, agree to Mayweather's own over-the-top requirement on drug testing, rather than choosing to fight Joshua Clottey instead?

Pacquiao offered his own answer in a scathing statement: "For including my country in the picture, claiming that we are producers of the best performance-enhancing drugs, Mayweather and those who are guilty need to get punished, the sooner, the better, whether it be in the courts or in the ring. In all my years of fighting, I have never tested positive for any steroids or performance-enhancing drug use. I will provide any specimen, whether it be blood or urine samples, just right after the fight, but not a day or two before, for obvious reasons."

After a last-ditch mediation effort to save the fight failed during the first week of January, Mayweather fired back, saying he was "thoroughly disgusted that Pacquiao and his representatives are trying to blame me for the fight not happening when clearly the blame is on them," and that "not only do I want to fight Manny Pacquiao, I want to whip his punk ass."

"Before the mediation, my team proposed a 14-day, no blood-testing window leading up to the fight. But it was rejected," Mayweather said in the statement. "I am still proposing the 14-day window, but he is still unwilling to agree to it, even though this is obviously a fair compromise on my part, as I wanted the testing to be up until the fight and he wanted a 30-day cutoff. The truth is he just doesn't want to take the tests."

Arum disputed that Mayweather ever extended the 14-day cutoff proposal, although Ellerbe claimed he had text messages, in an exchange between Top Rank president Todd duBoef and



Mayweather's father, Floyd Sr., was the first to publicly accuse Pacquiao of using steroids. He is now one of the defendants in the defamation lawsuit Pacquiao has filed in Nevada federal court.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

PHOTO BY VINCE BUCCI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pacquiao has hired attorney Daniel Petrocelli to handle his defamation lawsuit. Petrocelli is best known for winning a 1997 wrongful-death civil judgment against O. J. Simpson.

Golden Boy Promotions chief marketing officer Bruce Binkow, on that very topic. And Pacquiao, after insisting on a 30-day cutoff, reduced that to 24 days after the Mayweather side cited an HBO *24/7* episode, before Pacquiao-Ricky Hatton, in which he gave a blood sample in close proximity to the fight.

That blood sample, it turned out, was provided 24 days before the Hatton fight, upon which Pacquiao's final proposal was based.

So that was the killing blow to potentially the richest fight in history: a 10-day disagreement.

In the immediate aftermath of the negotiating collapse, Pacquiao-Clottey was announced for March 13—the proposed date for Mayweather-Pacquiao—at Cowboys Stadium, the same site Mayweather spurned. Two days later, Richard Schaefer, the Golden Boy CEO who represented Mayweather in the failed talks, said Mayweather still intended to fight on that same date in Las Vegas.

Two days after Schaefer's remarks, Ellerbe, who hinted all along that Shane Mosley might be Mayweather's backup plan, said his man might await the outcome of the cancelled January 30 Andre Berto-Mosley fight before determining his next opponent, and that March 13 might not be their next date after all.

Certainly, with Mayweather-Mosley as the fall-back plan, then Pacquiao's position in the failed negotiations—that Mayweather was squirreling out of a dangerous fight to protect his undefeated record—has been mitigated quickly.

Yet there also was talk that Mayweather could fight a host of other potential opponents in March, including Nate Campbell, Paul Malignaggi, and Timothy Bradley. But those rumors were squashed when the Andre Berto-Shane Mosley fight was canceled and Mosley signed to fight Mayweather on May 1.

In the end, all that is certain is that Mayweather-Pacquiao will not happen this spring.

So how did it happen that two fighters who agreed to guaranteed purses of $25 million, plus pay-per-view percentages that might have pushed each man's take to more than $40 million, fall apart over such an issue?

Arum said he is uncertain whether Schaefer or Mayweather Sr. actually planted the seed about Pacquiao and performance-enhancing drugs. On September 14, Mayweather Sr., in an interview with this reporter, said he believed Pacquiao was on steroids. At roughly the same time, Schaefer, in an interview with the well-known boxing writer Ronnie Nathanielsz of *Manila Standard Today*, said he was "sure Pacquiao was using performance-enhancing drugs," according to the defamation lawsuit filed December 30, on Pacquiao's behalf, in a Nevada federal court.

That lawsuit named Mayweather, his father, his uncle and trainer Roger Mayweather, Mayweather Promotions, Schaefer, and Oscar De La Hoya as defendants.

Mayweather Sr.'s comments were published and widely circulated in a video on *The Grand Rapids Press* Web site. Nathanielsz said he opted against publishing Schaefer's comments initially, in deference to the negative impact they might have on Mayweather-Pacquiao talks and only did so after the issue became big news.

Meantime, the working relationship between Arum and Schaefer, which generally was positive at the beginning of negotiations—and, in fact, was the reason both sides wanted Schaefer involved in the first place—crumbled openly as talks deteriorated into an unworkable heap.

"I felt from the beginning that this would never happen," Arum said. "I really think that he's scared to death of Pacquiao and he's done a lot of damage along the way. Instead of saying he's not going to fight him, he did a lot of damage along the way, related to the performance-enhancing drugs. But that's now between him, the rest of them, and the court. I'm very confident that Mr. Mayweather, and all those people, are going to pay the price."

Arum said Schaefer and Al Haymon, Mayweather's business adviser, tried to talk their fighter into acquiescing at the 11th hour, to no avail. Ellerbe called

Timeline To Nowhere

DECEMBER 2009

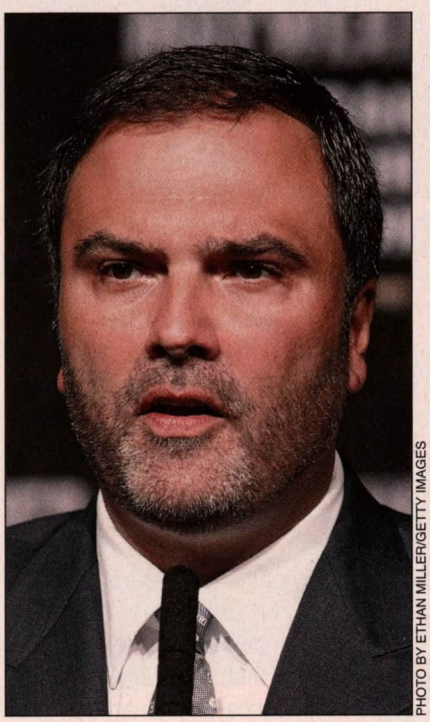
2: Eighteen days after Manny Pacquiao defeated Miguel Cotto, most major negotiating points for a Floyd Mayweather fight, except venue, seem resolved. Mayweather agrees to a 50-50 purse split.

4: Pacquiao accepts financial terms in a meeting with promoter Bob Arum in the Philippines.

6: Arum says he is "extremely confident" the fight will happen.

8: Richard Schaefer, representing Mayweather, cancels a trip to Dallas for a scheduled site survey of Cowboys Stadium.

12: Leonard Ellerbe, Mayweather's adviser, says his side is demanding "random, Olympic-style blood testing," in addition to the urine testing required by the Nevada State Athletic Commission.



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Schaefer: Also named in Pacquiao's lawsuit

22: Pacquiao camp says its fighter will agree to only three blood samples—one before the kick-off press conference in early January, a second no later than 30 days before the fight, and a third after the fight—prompting Mayweather's side to release a statement saying the fight is "in jeopardy." Arum says, "He'll go his way, we'll go our way."

25: Pacquiao's spokesman sends a press release announcing the fighter's intent to sue Mayweather and several of his associates.

27: Arum says the fight will not happen if resolution isn't reached within 24 hours.

28: Nevada State Athletic Commission orders both fighters to submit to a ran-

that "a lie" and said such talks would be impossible since Schaefer doesn't even have Mayweather's telephone number. The retired federal judge who heard the failed mediation attempt, Daniel Weinstein, chastised Arum for breaching the mediation gag order.

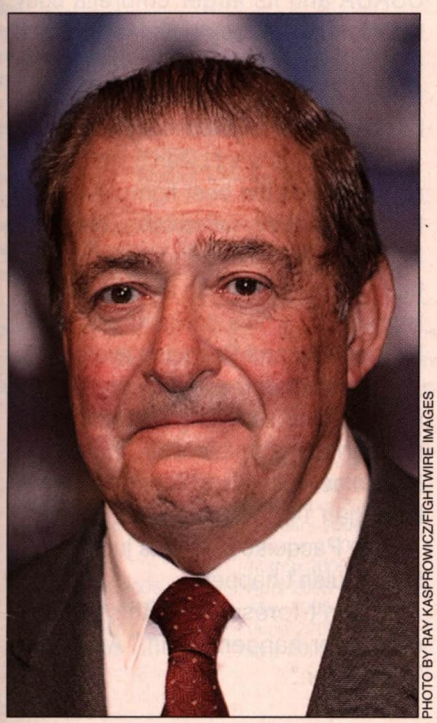
Until the drug-testing snafu surfaced, it seemed the venue choice was the last issue to be resolved in Mayweather-Pacquiao negotiations. Instead, their fight might occur in a federal courtroom, according to Pacquiao's attorney, Daniel Petrocelli, who is best known for winning a 1997 wrongful-death civil judgment against O. J. Simpson.

"You do not publicly state that a world-class athlete, any athlete, is illegally taking drugs, unless you know for a fact they're doing so," Petrocelli said. "Otherwise, you're breaking the law. And you're playing with a person's reputation that has taken years of hard work to earn. They've already done untold damage, in the tens of millions of dollars, and we're going to see that this doesn't happen again, and we're going to recover all the damage that they've already inflicted."

Travis Tygart, chief executive of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, was outspoken in advocating Mayweather's position for more blood testing, saying that while urine testing could detect traditional steroids, it was ineffective in detecting elevated levels of Human Growth Hormone and the blood booster EPO, both of which are naturally produced. Tygart also dismissed Pacquiao's claims that blood testing could weaken an athlete, saying the minute amount of blood needed for sampling is naturally regenerated in less than an hour.

For years, steroid use in boxers, with the exception of heavyweights, was dismissed as counterproductive because it would produce weight gains for athletes whose efforts are focused on reducing weight.

In fact, with the exception of James Toney, who tested positive for steroids



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Arum: No longer "extremely confident"

dom urine test, as required periodically of its licensees.

30: Pacquiao sues Mayweather, his father Floyd Sr., Roger Mayweather, Mayweather Promotions, Schaefer, and Oscar De La Hoya, alleging defamation, in a Nevada federal court.

JANUARY 2010

5: A retired federal judge, Daniel Weinstein, conducts a nine-hour mediation hearing in Santa Monica, California, in an attempt to find common ground between the two camps.

6: Mediation fails and Pacquiao's side declares the fight dead.

8: Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey fight announced for March 13 in Dallas.

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Shane Mosley en route to beating De La Hoya in 2003. Mosley passed the drug test, but later admitted that he had used performance-enhancing drugs prior to the fight. Ironically, De La Hoya is now being sued for accusing Pacquiao of using PHD.

after a 2005 fight in New York and a 2007 fight in California, and Frans Botha, who tested positive for steroids after a 1995 win over Axel Schulz, the biggest names to test positive for illegal steroids were not heavyweights: junior middleweight Fernando Vargas and featherweight Orlando Salido, both in Nevada in 2002; and Mariano Carrera, also in 2002, in Berlin.

During roughly the same time frame that Vargas and Salito were testing positive, Mosley was passing the same Nevada drug tests. But during the federal BALCO investigation, it was disclosed that Mosley, in fact, was using both EPO and "the clear," neither of which was detected by urine testing.

Keith Kizer, executive director of the Nevada commission, said he is satisfied with urine as the base drug-testing method in his state. Even if he weren't, he acknowledged that budget cuts would make it difficult for NSAC to institute costlier blood sampling in all testing applications.

"The USADA has been able to catch some big names over the years. They caught Ben Johnson. We caught Fernando Vargas," Kizer said. "But occasionally, they'll find something where they'll miss it, like they did with Marion Jones, and we missed it with Shane Mosley, with 'the cream' and 'the clear.' But that was something that it didn't matter who tested; it could be the Olympics; it could be us; it didn't matter."

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Nevada State Athletic Commission Executive Director Keith Kizer said he is satisfied with urine as the base drug-testing method in his state.

In the years since Jones and Mosley squeezed through the testing cracks, USADA and its larger umbrella body, the World Anti-Doping Agency, contend that more sophisticated methods for testing have been devised, requiring a blend of blood and urine sampling.

Boxing fans want clean fights. Most of all, they want the best fights. And amid the rubble of the failed talks, they were left with one overriding question that had nothing to do with blood testing, or lawsuits, or who's dodging whom: Will Mayweather and Pacquiao ever fight?

Mayweather made it clear that he is interested in revisiting negotiations at the earliest possible date, as long as Pacquiao submits to blood testing no later than 14 days before they fight.

The Pacquiao side was just as clear that wouldn't happen.

"I can't foresee that this fight will ever, ever happen again," Arum said. "Ever, ever." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

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WHO NEEDS MAYWEATHER?

Pacquiao-Clottey: Texas-Size Consolation Prize

By Don Stradley

June 13, 2009, New York City: *In an area cordoned off for the press at Madison Square Garden, Joshua Clottey and some of his camp members stood with dazed expressions, as if they'd all just witnessed a tragic accident. Less than an hour before, Clottey had gone 12 rounds with Puerto Rican star Miguel Cotto. Clottey sincerely believed he had won. When the scorecards were turned in, though, he was on the short end of a split decision. He'd been stoic during the postfight press conference, but when promoter Bob Arum said nothing about a rematch, Clottey grew visibly agitated. Clottey was boxing's latest odd man out.*

After most of the press had packed up and cleared out, Clottey and two of his handlers milled around aimlessly, trying to get the ear of anyone who would listen. The handlers were emotional; one of them was on the verge of tears. "No one will fight him now," said another. "They see how good he is. Why would they fight him?" As they pleaded Clottey's case, the fighter was mostly quiet, perhaps resigned to a career of close decisions going the other way and big names avoiding him. The expression on his face was hard to describe—he was looking into the distance, but also looking inward.

It was very difficult to look him in the eye.

And then, just like in the old Hollywood movies where the lead dancer sprains an ankle and the director shouts out "Send in the understudy!" Joshua Clottey is getting a chance after all.

When the Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather bout fell apart in January, Clottey was promptly cut and pasted into Mayweather's slot. But even though Clottey held his own against Cotto last year, many fans still need convincing that Pacquiao-Clottey will provide an appropriate balm in the absence of a superfight. What those cranky fans should realize is that while Clottey is not at the level of a Mayweather, he's not exactly some tired old journeyman. If the Mayweather-Pacquiao bout hadn't been so close to being delivered, we'd be looking at Pacquiao-Clottey as a pretty good fight on its own.

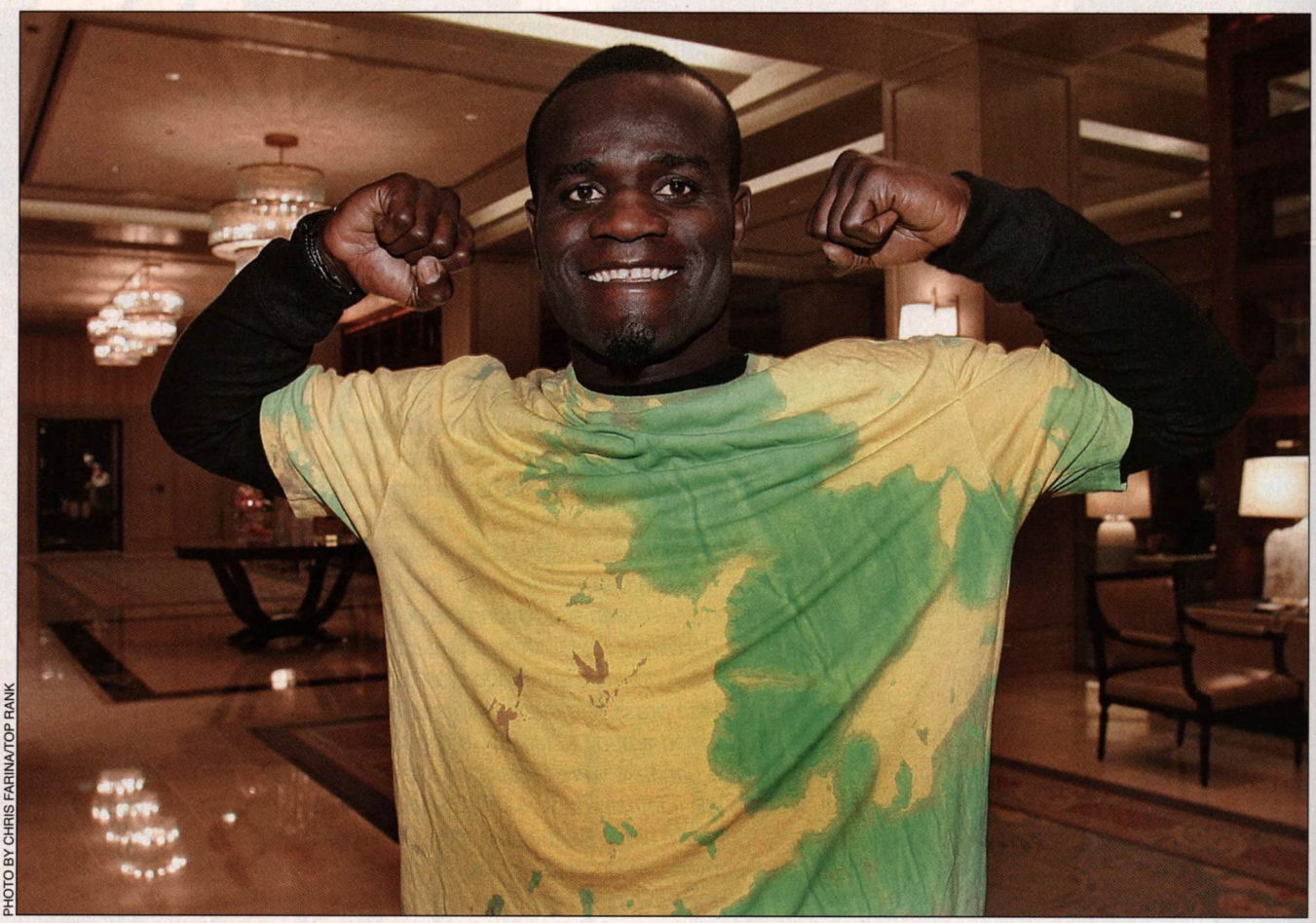
Stylewise, Clottey offers a number of challenges. He's a full-sized, physically powerful welterweight—Clottey looked bigger and stronger than Cotto when they met last year, and many thought Cotto would be too big for Pacquiao—and he never has been kayoed. Clottey works behind a rock-solid defensive stance, sometimes standing perfectly still with his hands over his face. Cotto hit him like a heavy bag all night and hardly bothered him.

Clottey, 35-3 (20), also is a good counterpuncher who can be effective to the body and has a sneaky uppercut. Clottey's not known for knockout power—he has had some hand problems—but he will have advantages over Pacquiao in height and reach. He's a bit slow on his feet, but he knows how to cut off a ring and is fairly good at walking down an opponent.

Those who aren't convinced that Clottey is worth Pacquiao's time tend to focus on Clottey's flaws. He has plenty: He is sometimes a slow starter and sometimes a poor finisher. He tends to throw punches in bursts, but then, satisfied after landing a few shots, he reverts to his shell-like defense. Also, because he rarely gets hurt, he tends to think he's in control. He's yet to understand that judges don't favor the man standing in a corner with his guard up. What's more, Clottey has a tendency towards the dramatic. When Cotto pushed him off during a clinch last June, Clottey fell to the canvas and laid there as if he expected an ambulance to show up. This is unusual for a fighter who otherwise seems sturdy. It's during these moments that one questions Clottey's mental makeup.

At different times, Clottey has exhibited all the facets of boxing—offense, defense, resilience, etc.—but he's yet to put everything together and become a complete fighter. At times he looks so awkward you'd swear he was a southpaw, but in fact he uses an orthodox stance. The awkward label has been affixed to Clottey because so many of his fights have involved headbutt controversies.

The most dangerous weapon in Clottey's arsenal, and what Pacquiao will have to be most aware of, is undoubtedly Clottey's head. The sheer contour of it is



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Nobody was happy about the Pacquiao-Mayweather fight imploding, but Clottey ended up as the major beneficiary of the cancellation. Not only was it an unexpected opportunity, it will also provide Clottey with the biggest purse of his career.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Ironically, both Pacquiao and Clottey's most recent fight was against Miguel Cotto. Clottey lost a hard-fought, 12-round split decision to Cotto in June 2009 (above), while Pacquiao pounded Cotto into a 12th round TKO victim in November '09 (below).

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

The pound-for-pound king entered Cowboys Stadium with much fanfare, including the famous Dallas Cheerleaders. Pacquiao told the media that he "felt like a football player" when he came through the tunnel and onto the field.

menacing, the forehead bulging slightly as if nature designed Clottey with the specific intention of giving other fighters headaches and bad cuts. And very few mortals survive a run-in with Clottey. Cotto suffered a gruesome cut and probably lost a few rounds last June due entirely to a clash of heads. Other victims of Clottey's noggin include Steve Martinez, whose 2005 bout with Clottey was ruled a "no-contest" after two rounds when an accidental butt tore open the flesh above Martinez' left eye, and Carlos Baldomir, who was cut badly by a Clottey butt during their 1999 bout. Clottey seemed to go on a headbutting rampage in the later rounds and eventually lost to Baldomir by disqualification. Clottey's 2008 bout with Zab Judah was stopped and awarded to Clottey on a technical decision when the referee ruled that a cut impairing Judah's vision had been caused by an accidental butt, although replays showed Judah's cut was from a

How Many Seats Can They Fill?

Another feature of the Pacquiao-Clottey bout is that it's taking place at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas. Cowboys owner Jerry Jones was in the running to host Pacquiao-Mayweather, but he seems pretty happy to have Pacquiao-Clottey.

"This is a very significant fight and I'm truly ecstatic," Jones told Yahoo! Sports. "From the time we began work on the stadium, I envisioned bringing boxing here. We have a very large Hispanic fanbase surrounding us and they're very loyal boxing fans. I think they'll be thrilled with this event."

The only problem is that Hispanic fans might have turned out for Pacquiao versus a Mexican, but whether they'll come out to see a Pacquiao versus a Ghanaian is a big question. The idea that Pacquiao is some sort of Muhammad Ali character who can create an event regardless of the opponent is going to be put to the test in Arlington, where top tickets range from $50 to $700.

Arum believes the site itself is a selling point and has been quoted endlessly about how the event will be one of the most amazing shows in the history of boxing. The $1.2-billion facility features a state of the art, 40-million dollar HD video board that measures 72 feet high and 160 feet across, and seats 100,000, although Jones says it will be scaled down for approximately 45,000. While Arum may be over-selling the value of Cowboys Stadium to those of us watching at home, there is certainly a unique atmosphere in a stadium setting.

For many years, baseball parks were the preferred place to hold big fights, with Yankee Stadium hosting many major bouts during the 1920s through the 1950s. The final Yankee Stadium bout was Ali-Ken Norton III in 1976. The Houston Astrodome and Shea Stadium hosted some big boxing events when they were shiny new venues in the 1960s. In recent years, Oscar De La Hoya has fought in some impressive sites, drawing 50,000 to Sun Devil Stadium at the height of his fame, while fighters such as Wladimir Klitschko and Joe Calzaghe have filled enormous sites overseas.

But what does this mean for Pacquiao-Clottey? A Filipino versus a Ghanaian in Texas doesn't quite sound like a combination for success, although Jones and Arum are optimistic that Cowboys fans will magically morph into Pacquiao fans overnight. As former President George W. Bush allegedly told Arum at a Cowboys' game, "Who needs Mayweather?"

That's what Arum and Jones will be telling each other right up until March 13.

–D.S.

punch—it's as if Clottey's reputation as a head-banger precedes him.

There was a time when Pacquiao, 50-3-2 (38), suffered nasty headbutt cuts against opponents such as Agapito Sanchez, Erik Morales, and Jorge Solis. The younger Pacquiao was such a hard-charging fighter that cracking heads was inevitable. But since those days, Pacquiao has become more refined; he's so good at using footwork and ring generalship that he should be able to avoid Clottey's big head, sting him with right jabs all night, and earn a decision. A fighter who doesn't always give you three minutes of each round or remains stationary while his opponent hits him isn't going to beat a man who has been THE RING's Fighter of the Year three times. But while Pacquiao seems a likely winner on paper, there's another question this bout will bring up, and it's something we never thought we'd be concerned about when it comes to Pacquiao, and that's his marquee value.

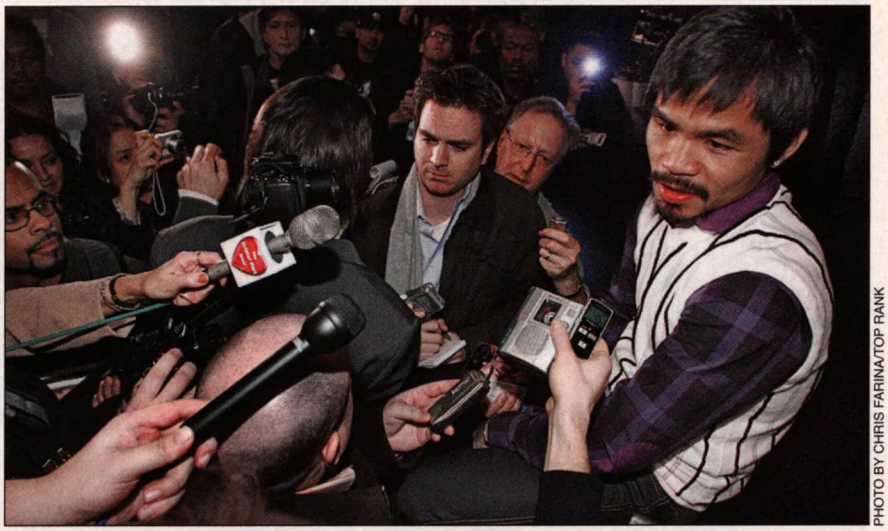

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pacquiao was mobbed by the media at the New York City press conference, but most of the questions were about the scuttled Mayweather fight. Time to let go, fellas. It's a new day, a new fight.

Arum is putting Pacquiao into a pay-per-view situation without a star in the opposing corner, leading us to wonder if Arum has overestimated Pacquiao's drawing power. This is not Pacquiao versus a Puerto Rican icon, or a British icon, or a Mexican icon. It's Pacquiao versus a fighter whose name means nothing outside boxing circles. Who could blame casual fans for not wanting this one? Potential customers also may have been put off by Pacquiao's at-

Cowboys Stadium: Site for Pacquiao-Clottey

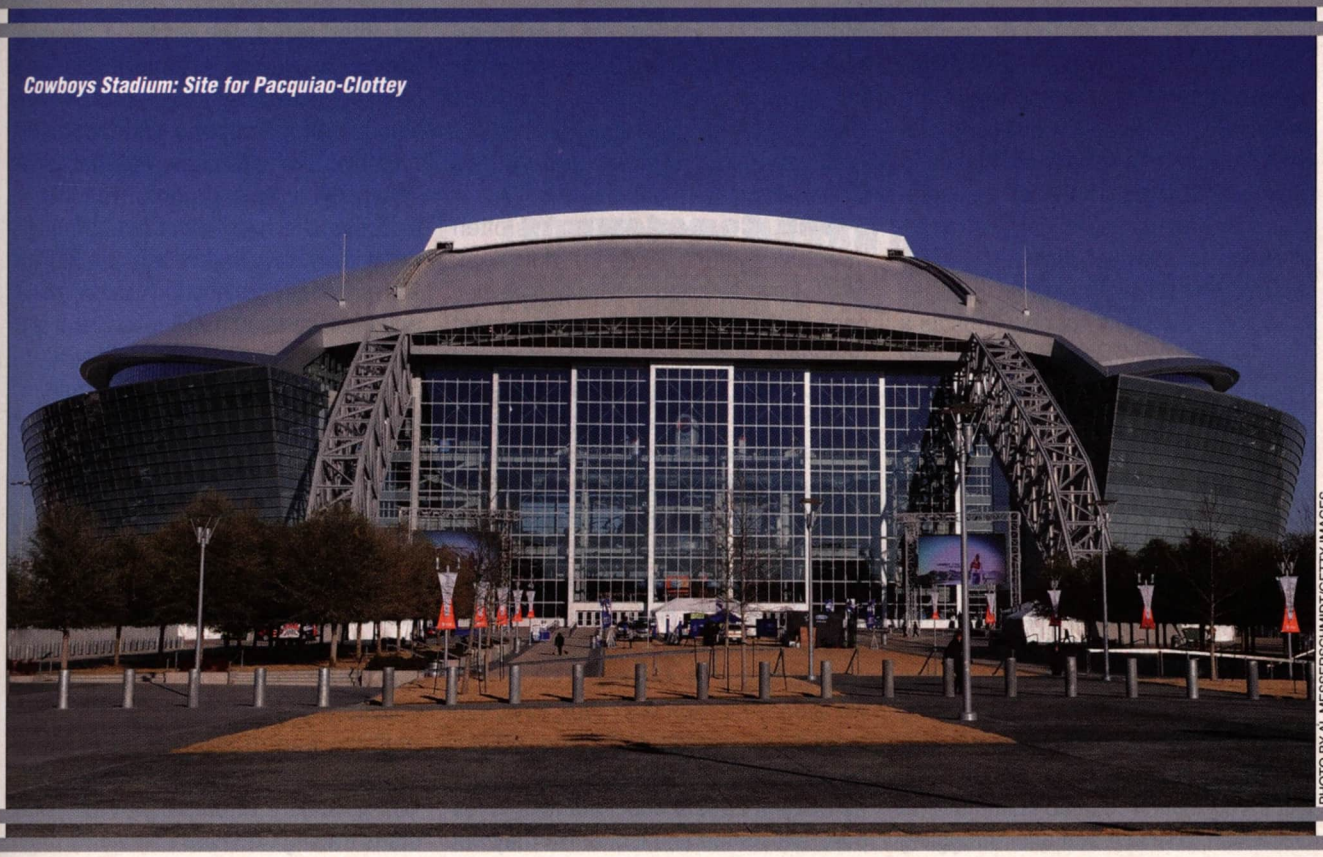

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PHOTO BY ROBERT HUGHES/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Pacquiao fans turned up in Arlington, Texas, the site of Cowboys Stadium, to welcome their hero to town. It will be interesting to see what size crowd the fight will draw in a city that has not hosted a major fight in many years.

titude about blood testing during the Mayweather negotiations. People hardly need a reason to lose interest in the sport—a bum decision, a dull fight, or a poor undercard is usually all it takes to drive people away. The blood testing fiasco may have damaged Pacquiao as an attraction, for this fight, anyway.

Of course, the ultimate disaster would be if the show not only flops as a pay-per-view event, but if Clottey pulled off an upset. Could he? Well, there are always the intangibles to consider. For instance ...

Distractions: Pacquiao has been through a lot lately. The war of words with Mayweather, threats of legal action, the drug testing fiasco, and another political run in the Philippines may play on his mind as March approaches. Of course, Pacquiao is well known for thriving in chaos, and for the past several years he's lived a life surrounded by hoopla and high-end security. But if you think Pacquiao is immune to distraction, consider that after struggling to a draw in his first bout with Juan Manuel Marquez, Pacquiao blamed part of the trouble on his ill-fitting socks. (Perhaps Clottey should engage in a bit of prefight gamesmanship and demand that he choose Pacquiao's socks for him.)

The Comedown: We often hear that fighters get up for a big fight, only to have it yanked away, and then they can't get motivated for the replacement opponent. If fans are disappointed that Pacquiao isn't fighting Mayweather, can you imagine how Pacquiao feels? He has strived to make each of his bouts bigger than the one previous, and he's constantly sought out challenges that tested him in greater increments. After fighting consecutive superstars in Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton, and Cotto, can he gear himself up for Clottey?

Clottey's Durability: Did we already mention this? Well, to go into more detail, consider that Clottey will not be weight-drained, ala De La Hoya, and he doesn't have a knockout loss in his past, ala Hatton and Cotto. He may not be at the elite level, but he is arguably fresher and stronger than Pacquiao's recent opponents. It's been a while since Pacquiao hit someone and they didn't crumble. Even Marquez, who has given Pacquiao two hard fights, falls when Pacquiao hits him flush. Clottey, though, doesn't go anywhere when you hit him. Pacquiao may connect on Clottey's chin, and the Ghanaian may just smile at him. Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, has been vocal about wanting Pacquiao to be the first to kayo Clottey, so Roach understands that Clottey's durability gives the fight a curiosity factor.

Can Clottey take Pacquiao's big blasts? For that matter, can Pacquiao take Clottey's, especially in the late rounds? While Clottey isn't a big hitter, he's stopped a few men in their tracks, and unlike Hatton and Cotto, Clottey's probably going to stay with Pacquiao until the end. It will be interesting to see how Pacquiao responds in rounds 10, 11, and 12 when a big welterweight starts trading with him.

The Opportunity: Clottey has been an uneven performer in big fights. At 32, though, he has found himself in an incredible position. Call it fate, chance, or providence, but he somehow drew the lucky ticket when the Mayweather-Pacquiao bout collapsed. Now he finds himself facing one of the most famous fighters in the world, something that would've been thought unlikely a few months earlier. That he is also promoted by Top Rank had a lot to do with it—after haggling with the Mayweather camp and Golden Boy Promotions, Arum most likely wanted an easier time. Clottey would've probably agreed to fight Pacquiao underneath a banana tree on Pacquiao's estate.

Certain fighters go through a transformation when they're given a chance like this. When Oliver McCall emerged from a career of mediocrity in 1994 to drill Lennox Lewis with a right hand and take the WBC heavyweight title, boxing writer Hugh McIlvaney wrote in *Sports Illustrated* that it was "proof of the cleansing power of opportunity." It's as if something clicks in a fighter's mind and he realizes there are no more tomorrows. He trains hard, and feeling like some child of destiny, comes into the ring with a kind of sheen that he hasn't shown previously. It happens. Granted, we're talking about someone fighting the fight of a lifetime, but that's exactly what this is for Clottey.

Much will also depend on what Clottey learned in his bout with Cotto. That night he had Cotto bloody and exhausted, but he wouldn't or couldn't press the fight and take it over. He was content with his usual routine of fighting in spurts and covering up. If he's realized his mistakes, and approaches Pacquiao with a more aggressive attitude, he might make this fight worth the price of admission.

And if you're still frustrated that you didn't get Pacquiao versus Mayweather, consider that most of Mayweather's fights are a bit boring, while Clottey is, if nothing else, a wildcard with nothing to lose. Many fights have become unexpected classics with just such an ingredient. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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PAVLIK VS. THE TOP 10

HOW MANY COULD THE MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION BEAT?

By William Dettloff

Kelly Pavlik's stoppage of Miguel Espino in December was a welcome reminder of what everyone has liked all along about the world middleweight champion. Pavlik's familiar power, skills, and cool were on display from the start. Espino, tough but completely over-powered, was doomed.

But what if it wasn't the underpowered and under-qualified Espino in there? What if it were one of Pavlik's contenders? In this feature, THE RING examines Pavlik's top 10 contenders and reviews their placement, their chances at a title shot, how the fight would do at the box office, and what would happen in the ring.

A couple notes before we get started: if the middleweight division seems very weak, it's because, well, it is. And not because only one of the top-10 contenders, Paul Williams, is from America. Geography is not the issue, quality is.

And don't assume we are underestimating these guys because we haven't seen them. We live in a wonderful age in which the world is shrinking at a great rate and thanks to YouTube and other online resources, we were able to take a good, long look at these guys without ever having seen them on American television. Also, we cover fights that take place all over the world. We know these fighters.

It is interesting, however, that if these guys were all in the ring at the same time, it would look like there was a meeting at the United Nations and nobody told the African countries. Four of the top 10 are from Germany. Two are Australian, and another is a Brit of Irish descent. Another is Mexican. Aren't there any 160-pound guys in America anymore? Have MacDonald's and high fructose corn syrup ruined that too?

One more thing: As of this writing Roman Karmazin, fresh off his dramatic win over Donisio Miranda, is ranked 10th. That fight's a blowout, maybe worse than the Espino mugging. So in this analysis we replaced Karmazin with the excellent junior middleweight Sergio Martinez, who, of course, is from Spain, via Argentina.

Finally, this is being written in mid-January, and deals are made and un-made every day in this business. You know how that goes. So one of these fights might be signed by the time you read this. We'll see then how we did.

1. FELIX STURM

33-2-1 (14)

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Wins over Khoren Gevor (W 12) and Sebastian Sylvester (KO 7), THE RING's fourth and third-ranked contenders, respectively, keep Sturm at the top (although many thought Gevor deserved the win when the two met in July 2009). Victories over Koji Sato (KO 7), Randy Griffin (W 12) and Jamie Pittman (W 12) are less compelling.

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Sturm signed a four-year, $40-million contract with UFA Sports in January after leaving Universum Box Promotion and immediately called out Pavlik. If this were a couple years ago we'd say there was no chance. But with Pavlik in a hurry to regain momentum and Sturm maybe heading in a new direction, we think this could happen.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: This is a fairly big fight in the United States, where people still remember Sturm from his controversial loss to Oscar De La Hoya, and where Pavlik will always be a good draw. But it's dynamite in Germany, where Sturm, though not as popular as Arthur Abraham, enjoys enormous name recognition.

What Happens In The Fight: Sturm is a big, strong, experienced, long-armed middleweight with good skills and only moderate punching power. He doesn't have the mobility or skills to outbox Pavlik or the power to hurt him, but he stays reasonably competitive and drops a unanimous decision.

PHOTO BY JUERGEN SCHWARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

2. PAUL WILLIAMS
38-1 (27)

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Williams is a unique case. His signature wins have come over Sergio Martinez (W 12), Winky Wright (W 12), and Verno Phillips (KO 8)—all full-time junior middleweights. But no one who has seen him fight doubts his ability as a true 160-pounder. The guy is big.

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Better than likely. It was already signed when Pavlik's lingering staph infection kept pushing back the date and Williams decided to face Martinez rather than wait any longer. Both guys have won since, so presumably there's nothing to prevent it from happening, and HBO wants it to happen. That's encouraging.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: This is a very big fight for the hardcore and for Pavlik's Youngstown contingent. It's not a pay-per-view extravaganza, but everyone involved will make money. Would Bob Arum and Dan Goossen be willing to do it if that weren't the case?

What Happens In The Fight: Martinez had Williams down once and badly hurt several times. Martinez is faster than Pavlik and more versatile, but not nearly as heavy-handed. In one of the great back-and-forth brawls of the year (even better than Williams-Martinez) Pavlik stops Williams in the sixth.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Williams throws a southpaw jab at Martinez

3. SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER

33-3 (16)

PHOTO BY MATTHIAS KERN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: A decent showing against Sturm (L 12) and wins over Javier Castillejo (KO 12), Lajuan Simon (W 12), and Giovanni Lorenzo (W 12) got Sylvester where he is, even if his win over Lorenzo is thought by many to have been suspect. His kayo of Amin Asikainen (KO 11) in their rematch helps too.

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Little. Sylvester has no name recognition whatsoever in the United States, and it's not as though his style is especially appealing. All that's in it for Pavlik is the IBF title. Big deal.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: In Germany this is big. Very big. It's amazing what sells over there. In the U.S., this fills one of Youngstown's three VFW halls. Maybe.

What Happens In The Fight: Sylvester likes to come forward behind a jab and with his gloves up around his cheekbones. The slower the pace, the better he likes it. He's not a big puncher, he's slow, and in his first match with Asikainen, he was battered and stopped. Did we mention he's slow? This guy's made for Pavlik. Knockout in seven.

4. KHOREN GEVOR

31-4 (16)

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Gevor was stopped by Arthur Abraham (KO by 11) and lost what many believe was a terrible decision to Sturm (L 12). On the plus side, he's beaten Amin Asikainen (KO 7), Rafael Pintos (W 8), and Gustavo Magellanes (KO 8).

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Without even an alphabet title to throw in the pot, Gevor brings very little to the table. He's unknown in the States and Pavlik gets very little for going to Germany and risking the world title in the other guy's home country.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: In the States, this isn't a pay-per-view match. Okay, maybe a Top Rank split-site production, but that's it. Again, in Germany, where Gevor gets respect for his hard loss to Abraham and the controversial loss to Sturm, it's very big.

What Happens In The Fight: Of all these higher-ranked European 160-pounders, Gevor is probably the most talented. He has fasts hands, he's mobile, and he's a heck of a counter-puncher. By European standards, he's damned flashy. But he's not a particularly hard puncher and isn't skilled on the level that, say, Bernard Hopkins is. We say he gives Pavlik problems early before getting stopped around the eighth.

Gevor on the attack against Jeferson Luis Goncalo

PHOTO BY JOERN POLLEX/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

5. MATTHEW MACKLIN

26-2 (18)

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Macklin is the European middleweight champion by virtue of his explosive knockout of Amin Asikainen (KO 1), the same guy several others on this list have beaten. He also beat Rafael Pintos (W 10) and Wayne Elcock (KO 3) and probably is the most dynamic fighter on this list, reminding some of a middleweight Ricky Hatton, who also happens to be his close friend and promoter.

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Macklin and Hatton made it a point to call out Pavlik after Macklin's win over Pintos, even calling for a date in March. While it's far from a sure thing, Macklin has the connections, the background, and the kind of fan-friendly style to make this happen.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: If Macklin inspires a quarter of the passion that his promoter does, this could be big in the United States *or* Great Britain. It's bigger over there, or in Ireland, where Macklin's parents were born, than it is in the U.S., but it could be big no matter where they did it.

What Happens In The Fight: Let's put it this way: the only time we've seen Pavlik beaten up was when he faced a smart, superior technical boxer in Hopkins. The only time we've seen him badly hurt was against a fast-handed boxer-puncher, Jermain Taylor. Macklin is neither of these. He's a pressure fighter, and Pavlik eats those guys up. Pavlik by late, bloody stoppage.

PHOTO BY ANDREW YATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Macklin en route to victory over Amin Asikainen

6. ANTHONY MUNDINE

38-3 (23)

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Mundine's resume is less impressive than any other so far, but you've got to give him credit for his staying power; he's been around for a full 10 years and doesn't appear to be going anywhere. Among his more important recent wins are victories over Daniel Geale (W 12), Shannon Taylor (W 12), and Rafael Pintos (W 12). Two wins over Sam Soliman (KO 9 and W 12) don't hurt. Neither does a May 2006 win over Danny Green (W 12).

His Chances At Getting A Shot: There is utterly no reason to think Mundine has any interest in leaving Australia to face Pavlik, and Pavlik would be out of his mind to go there and face Mundine when no one in the U.S. knows who Mundine is. Still, as we went to press there were rumors that Pavlik's camp was trying to get HBO interested. Who knows? Stranger things have happened.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: In the States this is a fight for the hardcore only and Pavlik's unemployed minions. How big would it be in Australia? Consider this: Green's kayo of Roy Jones was front-page news. This would be a national holiday.

What Happens In The Fight: Mundine holds the dubious distinction of being one of only six men to be knocked out by Sven Ottke, who won 34 fights. But he did last the distance in a losing effort against Mikkel Kessler. He'd last all 12 against Pavlik too, in an ugly, awkward decision win for the champion.

PHOTO BY QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

7. DAVID LOPEZ

38-12 (23)

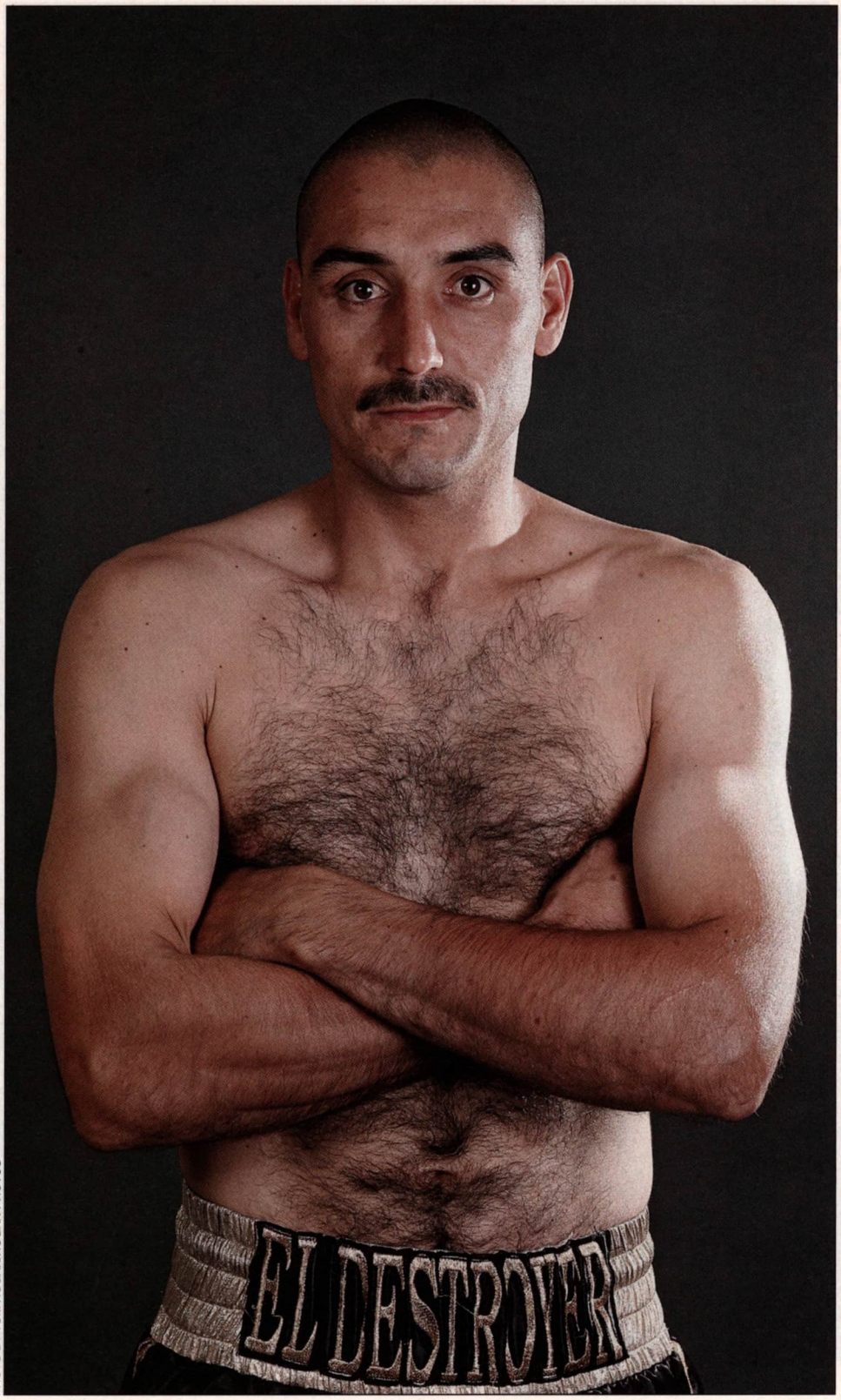


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/HOGAN PHOTOS

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: How about 14-straight wins and victories in 19 of his last 20? Lopez has earned a spot in the top 10 with activity (12 fights in four years, though only one in 2009) against a collection of solid, unexceptional opponents: Ossie Duran (W 10), Sam Miller (W 12), Michael Walker (W 10), Larry Marks (W 10), and Rocky Montoya (KO 6).

His Chances At Getting A Shot: If Pavlik is coming off a big fight against, say, Williams or Sturm or Macklin and needs a reasonable name but not someone who is going to give him a life-and-death struggle, Lopez could get the call.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: This is a small-to-medium Top Rank pay-per-view card from downtown Youngstown. No HBO, no Showtime. Genaro Hernandez, Al Bernstein, and Rich Marotta report from ringside. The picture is fuzzy.

What Happens In The Fight: Lopez is rough and tough and hungry, but he just doesn't have the tools to compete at the top levels of the sport. Pavlik by mid-rounds stoppage.

8. DANIEL GEALE

22-1 (13)

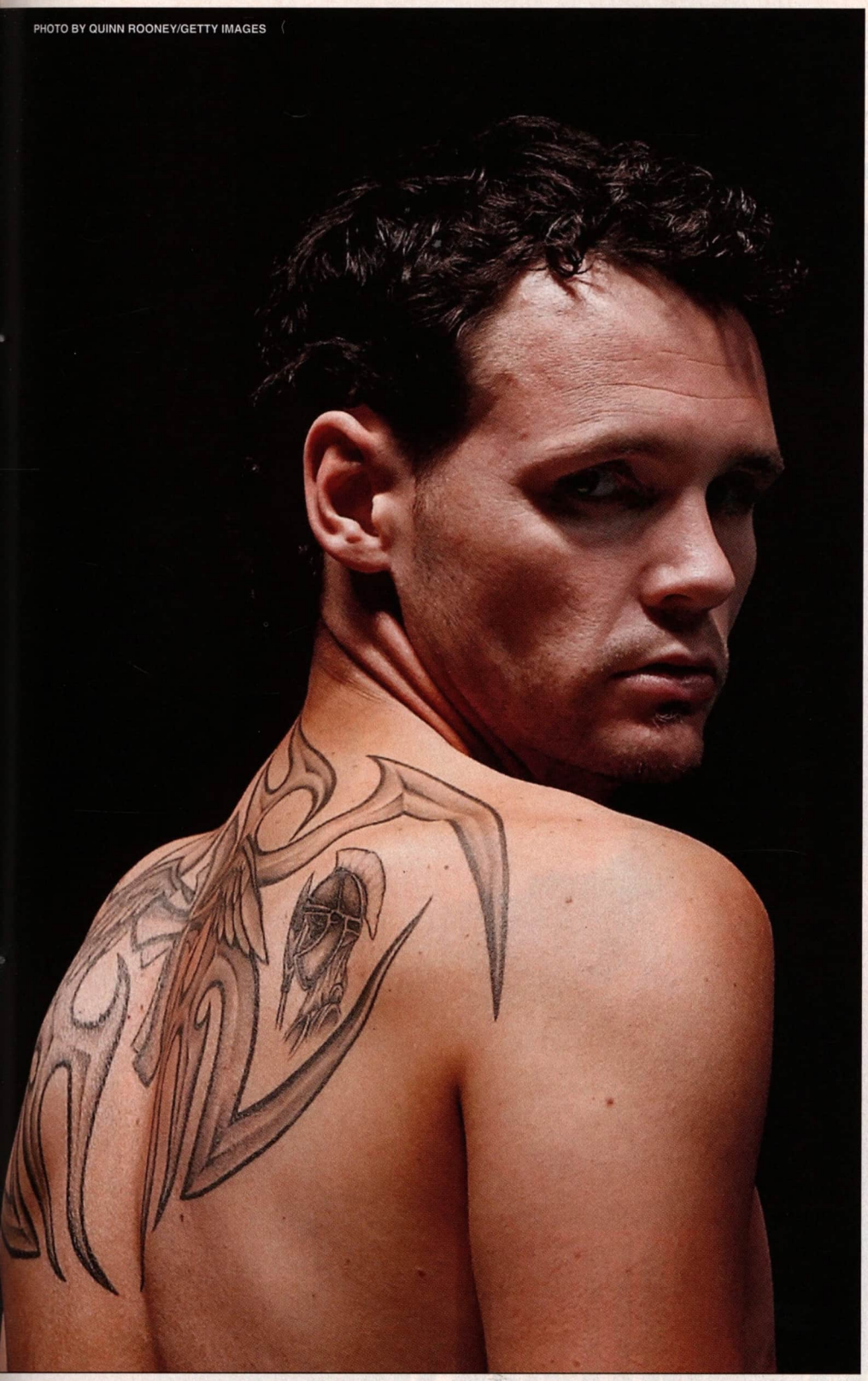


PHOTO BY QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Geale acquitted himself very well in a close May 2009 loss to Mundine (L 12) and stopped shopworn veteran Ian MacKillop (KO 1). Other relatively noteworthy opponents include Samir dos Santos Barbosa (W 12), Daniel McKinnon (W 10), and Daniel Dawson (W 12).

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Geale has never fought outside Australia, but unlike his countryman, Mundine, Geale would have nothing to lose coming to the U.S. to face Pavlik. He has no alphabet belt, never has, and is clearly second banana to Mundine in Australia. He's personable and has a fun, fan-friendly style. Why not?

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: This is a fun fight for Pavlik and his legions and not much else. HBO almost certainly wouldn't buy it, but Bob Arum would. And he'd be happy enough with the little bit of money it would make him.

What Happens In The Fight: Geale is an exuberant, tough, pressure fighter who stays relaxed and never stops punching. That's the good news. The bad for him is he's still a little green or fights like it anyway. And guys who walk right into Pavlik's right hand to get inside, as he surely would, don't beat Pavlik. Geale makes it very fun until about the sixth and lasts until the eighth.

9. SEBASTIAN ZBIK

28-0 (10)

PHOTO BY NADINE RUPP/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Because the division is shallow with a capital "S." Zbik's most important win is over Emanuele Della Rosa, who has 22 wins, but nine of those opponents had sub-500 records. Zbik is unbeaten, but he barely got by unproved Domenico Spada (W 12). On the other hand, he did stop one Ruben Varon (KO 4) for the all important WBO intercontinental middleweight title. The resume is thin. *Really* thin.

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Zbik is the WBC "interim" beltholder, while Pavlik owns the "regular" title, so you have to think that sooner or later the WBC will mandate that they meet. But this is the WBC, so who the hell knows? Zbik would be better off relinquishing the "title" and staying in Germany.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: This one is for the hardcore, the most jingoistic among us, and those who just don't like Germans in general.

What Happens In The Fight: Zbik appears to have reasonable skills and a fighter's heart, and who knows, maybe he's a monster and we just don't know it yet. What we do know is he's fought no one remotely on Pavlik's level. "The Ghost" in five rounds or less.

10. SERGIO MARTINEZ

44-2-2 (24)

Why He's Ranked Where He Is: Martinez is THE RING's top-ranked 154-pounder, but his eye-opening performances against Paul Williams (L 12), Kermit Cintron (D 12), and Alex Bunema (KO 8) mark him as a threat to any middleweight in the world, including Pavlik. Instead of 1-1-1 in his last three, he very easily could have been 3-0.

His Chances At Getting A Shot: Very high. As we went to press, Arum and Lou DiBella, Martinez' promoter, reportedly were negotiating over a fight between the two in April on HBO. After his wonderful war with Williams, Martinez is a hot property and a fan favorite. This is a high-grade matchup and everyone knows it.

Box Office Bust Or Blockbuster: Pavlik-Martinez is about as big as Pavlik-Williams, and HBO would love to get it. It wouldn't shatter any records, but it's a solid moneymaker and a can't-miss for hardcore fans and newbies to the sport.

What Happens In The Fight: Martinez' speed, versatility, and zeal for battle make this a tough one for Pavlik, who likes it much better when his opponent stands in front of him. Martinez would not. Pavlik's saving grace would be Martinez' tendency to go to sleep during the middle rounds, and that would be the difference, with Pavlik taking a very close, probably controversial, and hard-fought decision win. ■

PHOTO BY JAVIER CENTENO/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Timothy Bradley

"Boxing Changed Everything"

It almost seems as if Tim "Desert Storm" Bradley suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Well, not exactly nowhere, but for most of his first three years as a professional he was fighting in obscurity on the California club circuit, searching for a chance to show the world what he already knew—that he's a world-class fighter. But all the ballroom fights for short money Bradley had to take early in his career became worthwhile when he defeated WBC junior welterweight titlist Junior Witter, in Nottingham, England, in May 2008.

After vanquishing Witter on the Englishman's home turf, Bradley defeated Edner Cherry (W 12), Kendall Holt W 12), and Lamont Peterson (W 12) to bring his record to 25-0 (11) with 1 no-contest. The no-contest came against Nate Campbell, who decided he couldn't continue after suffering an eye cut that was caused by an accidental headbutt.

The 26-year-old Bradley now appears poised to take another step in his progression as an elite fighter. It's unlikely that 140-pound world champion Manny Pacquiao will ever fight at that weight again, and as soon as he officially relinquishes THE RING belt, Bradley, as THE RING's number-one junior welterweight contender, will have to be involved in any bout for the vacant championship.

Who would be in the other corner depends on what happens between now and then. It could be number-two rated Amir Khan or the winner of the alphabet unification bout on March 6 between Juan Urango (IBF) and Devon Alexander (WBC). But regardless of how things transpire, Bradley will be in the thick of it.

This time last year, only hardcore fight fans knew about Bradley. Now he's on the cusp of becoming one of the top-10 pound-for-pound fighters in the world.

A month after the Peterson victory, THE RING Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito spoke with Bradley, who was very candid about his past, his present, and where he sees his future headed.

Santoliquito reports: "Tim is the complete professional. You find he appreciates everything he has and everything he's going to get. He kept thanking me throughout the interview for just taking the time to talk to him. He's a real class act, and one of those rare pro athletes that gets it—he knows boxers have a short shelf life and he's trying to make the best of being on top while he can."

The Ring: The upward trajectory your career has taken recently seems to have garnered you a great deal of attention from boxing fans. Do you sense this?

Timothy Bradley: I feel it's starting to rise now, because I've faced Junior Witter, Kendall Holt, and Nate Campbell. Now, after I fought Lamont Peterson on TV and people have seen me fight, it's picking up. I'm an aggressive, volume puncher, and I like to think I excite people with my style. They see me pressure guys and they see the complete package. I feel fans are starting to get on the bandwagon. They had one foot on the bus and now they're starting to ride with me (*laughs*).

The Ring: Is it different being out in public now than it was, say, a year or two ago?

TB: Much different. I was in LA in a shoe store and someone came up to me and said, "Hi, champ." I didn't even notice at first. Then there was another time, when I was at the Cardinals-Packers [NFL] playoff game, and someone came up to me in Arizona at the game and said, "You look like Tim 'Desert Storm' Bradley." Then later, I was going to the restroom and someone else stopped me and started yelling, "The champ, the champ, the champ." I was looking around thinking this was kind of crazy (*laughs*). People were looking at me, and that's how I know my popularity is growing. I never had anything like that happen to me before. All of these people looking at me, some of them were wondering who I was, while other people were coming up to me asking me for my autograph (*laughs*) and taking pictures.

The Ring: Is life also different in Palm Springs, California, where you grew up and live today?

TB: I think it's growing here in my hometown, more people recognize me. I used to think it was the younger crowd who recognized me and now it's the old guys who have started to know me. It's a great feeling to get recognition in your hometown. It's awesome. I credit Showtime for building my status. People haven't seen a lot of me yet, even the ones in Palm Springs. I've been on TV seven or eight times, but the strangest thing happens if I go to Mexico. I'm like a celebrity down there (*laughs*). I can go down the street here in Palm Springs, and someone might nod their head because I look familiar. But I'm huge in Mexico (*laughs*). They were showing my

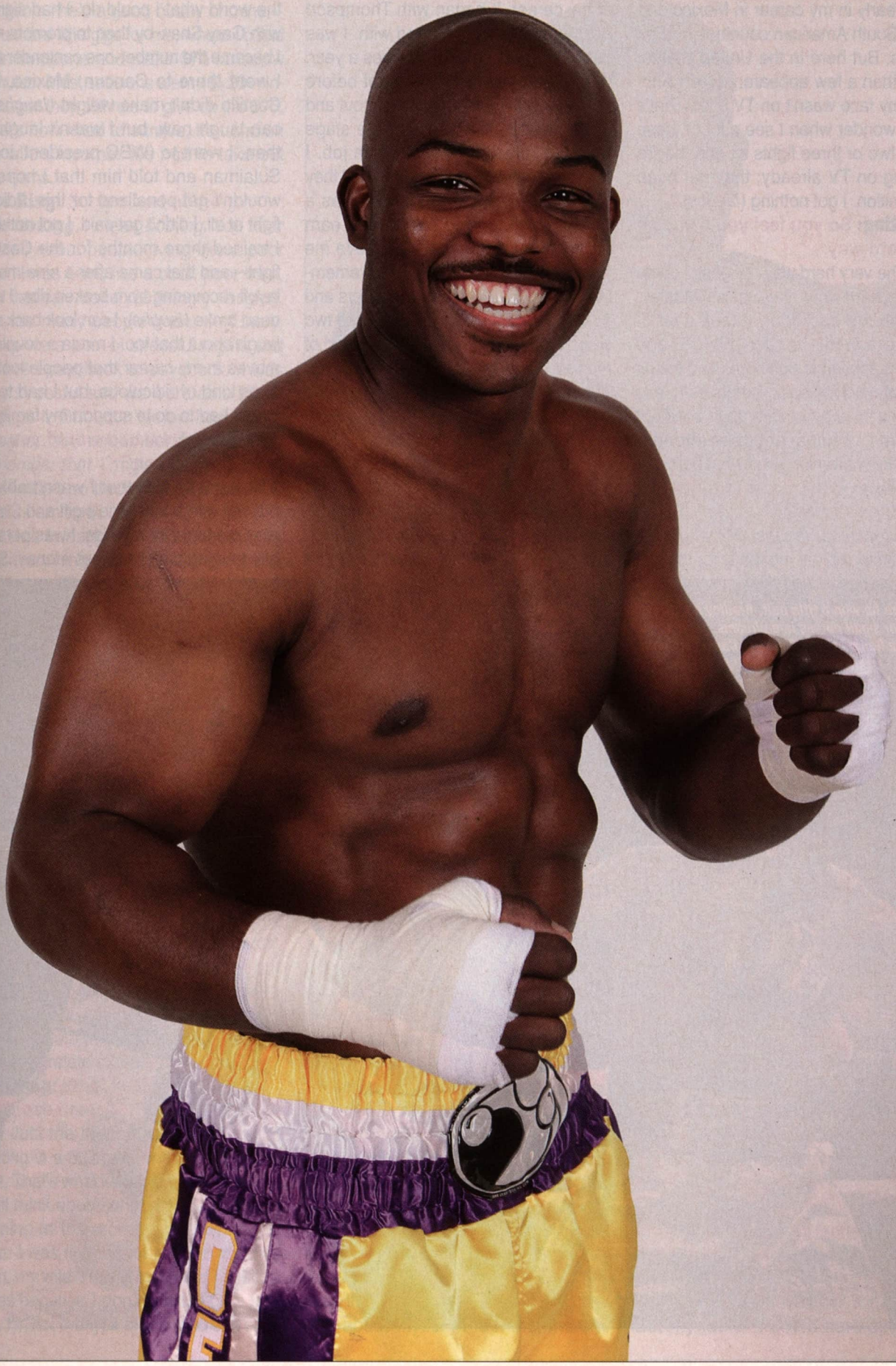


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

fights early in my career in Mexico and other South American countries on Fox Sports. But here in the United States, other than a few appearances on *ShoBox*, my face wasn't on TV a lot. That's why I wonder when I see a lot of these guys, two or three fights in, and they're fighting on TV already; they get huge recognition. I got nothing (*laughs*).

The Ring: So you feel you came up the hard way.

TB: The very hard way (*laughs*). I came up the hard way like Shane Mosley, through the backdoor. It took a lot of people a while to recognize Shane Mosley, fighting in ballrooms and things like that. Looking back, it means more to me now the way I came up in boxing. I wouldn't change anything though. Fighting where I fought is what built me.

The Ring: What do you remember from those times?

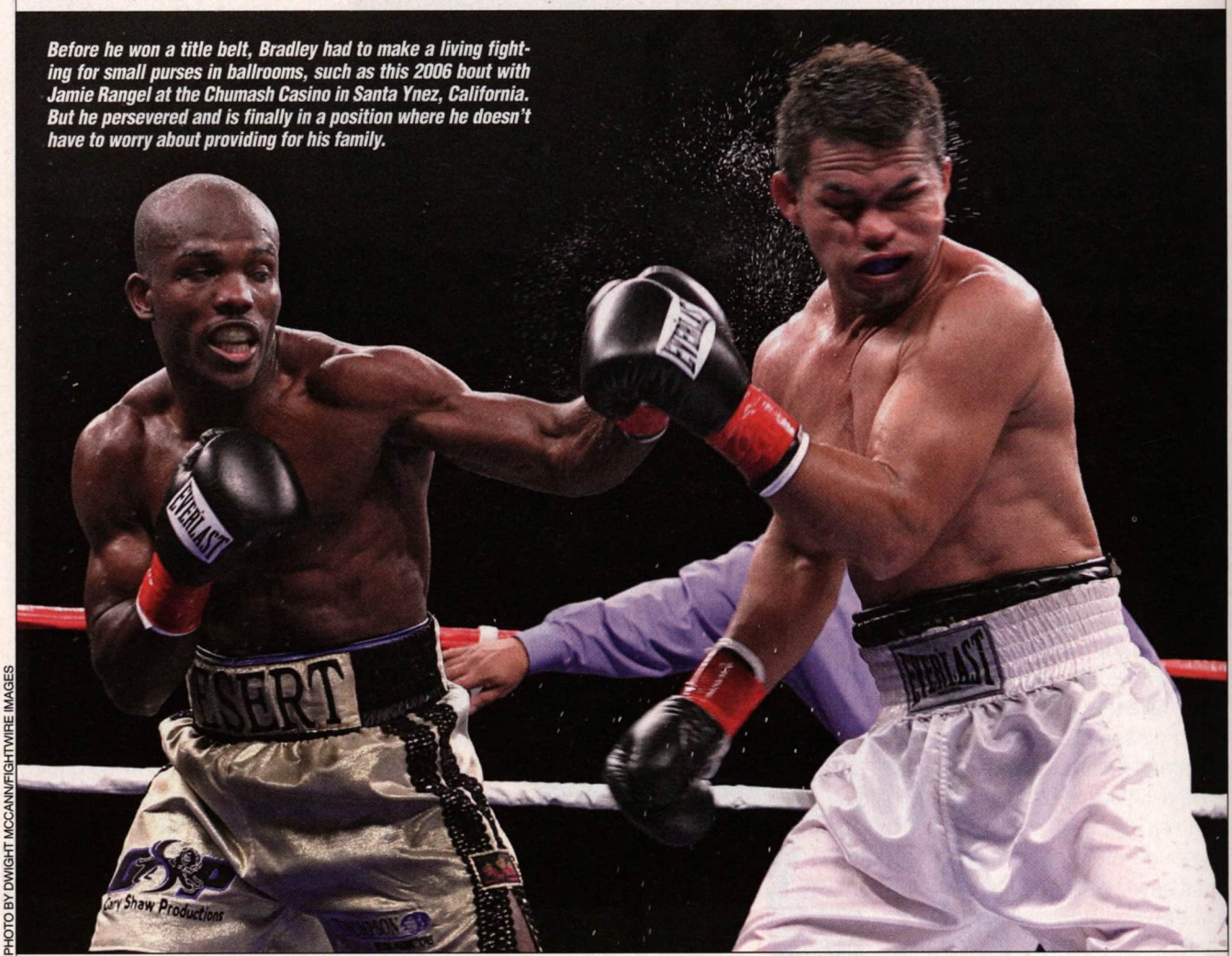
TB: Everything (*laughs*). My whole career coming up got me ready for the rest of my career. It began with Thompson Boxing, that's who I started with. I was busy and I was fighting 10 times a year. When I had my debut, I fought before 1,500 people. I was the second bout and the lights are on and the whole stage was awesome. They did a nice job. I won by second-round knockout and they liked me. It grew from there. It was a nice situation for me. You have to earn respect (*laughs*), because believe me (*laughs again*), it wasn't given. I remember making $1,000 for four-rounders and $5,000 for 10 rounds. This was like two years ago that I was making that kind of money (*laughs*). But I kept winning. That's what got me the championship fight with Junior Witter.

The Ring: What got you over the top and into major fights?

TB: I had a fight set up with Jose Luis Castillo in March 2008 for the number-one spot in the WBC. Castillo didn't make weight and I was ready to show the world what I could do. I had signed with Gary Shaw by then to promote me. I became the number-one contender and I went there to Cancun, Mexico, but Castillo didn't make weight (*laughs*). I can laugh now, but I wasn't laughing then. I went to (WBC president Jose) Sulaiman and told him that I hoped I wouldn't get penalized for this. I didn't fight at all. I didn't get paid. I got nothing. I trained three months for the Castillo fight—and that came after a nine-month layoff recovering from broken ribs. I was dead broke (*laughs*). I can look back and laugh about that too. I made a couple of moves in my career that people looked at as kind of ridiculous, but I had to do what I had to do to support my family.

The Ring: How bad would you say it was back then?

TB: It got so bad that I wasn't able to buy my wife a Valentine's gift and Christmas presents for my kids. I was personally training people to get money. Sam



Before he won a title belt, Bradley had to make a living fighting for small purses in ballrooms, such as this 2006 bout with Jamie Rangel at the Chumash Casino in Santa Ynez, California. But he persevered and is finally in a position where he doesn't have to worry about providing for his family.

PHOTO BY DWIGHT MCCANN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Jackson—he's a good buddy of mine—would find little gigs for me, where I could train someone and make $75 for a few minutes. Most sessions went 15, 20 minutes, but they still had to give up the $75. That's how I had to survive, that and on my wife's income. We had to take out two loans.

The Ring: So you had nothing?

TB: *Nothing.* I mean *nothing.* You hear stories about people living like a poor man. I was living like a poor, poor man, and that can make you hungry (*laughs*). Not too many people know that story. There were a lot of stressful nights and we lived paycheck to paycheck. It was very stressful and we were able to get through it. But I don't know how I did it (*laughs*). You remember that. *Oh, you remember that.* I'm glad I went through it. If I didn't go through it, I wouldn't be where I am now.

I was in danger of losing the house and everything started breaking down in the house. The refrigerator broke down; my wife's car broke down. My credit got messed up. We had one car then—and now I have five cars (*laughs*). I kept telling myself that it's just a matter of time. But for two years, I was dead broke.

The Ring: Did you begin to question yourself?

TB: You do, you do. It was absolutely embarrassing that I couldn't provide for my family. You feel like less of a man when you go through those times. I thought my wife would leave me. I couldn't sleep at night. I'd get headaches all of the time. It was terrible. My wife and me were arguing over stupid stuff. We were able to eat, but not eat out (*laughs*). When you go through something like that, you never forget it. Today is a mess with everyone losing their jobs, and I can relate to that.

The Ring: What kept you going during those times?

TB: Just the thought of going back to fighting in a ballroom, making $1,000 a fight. That's what kept me going. It's what I still think about when I'm training and running in the morning and when I'm tired. I was fighting for my life, my children, my wife. I'm still motivated by those times because I don't want to be a failure. I'm not the type of guy who can sit in a classroom and learn something for three or four hours. Boxing is what I know and what I'm good at. I live fearing going back to that life. I fear it so bad. Now that I have some money, I'm still scared how I spend it.

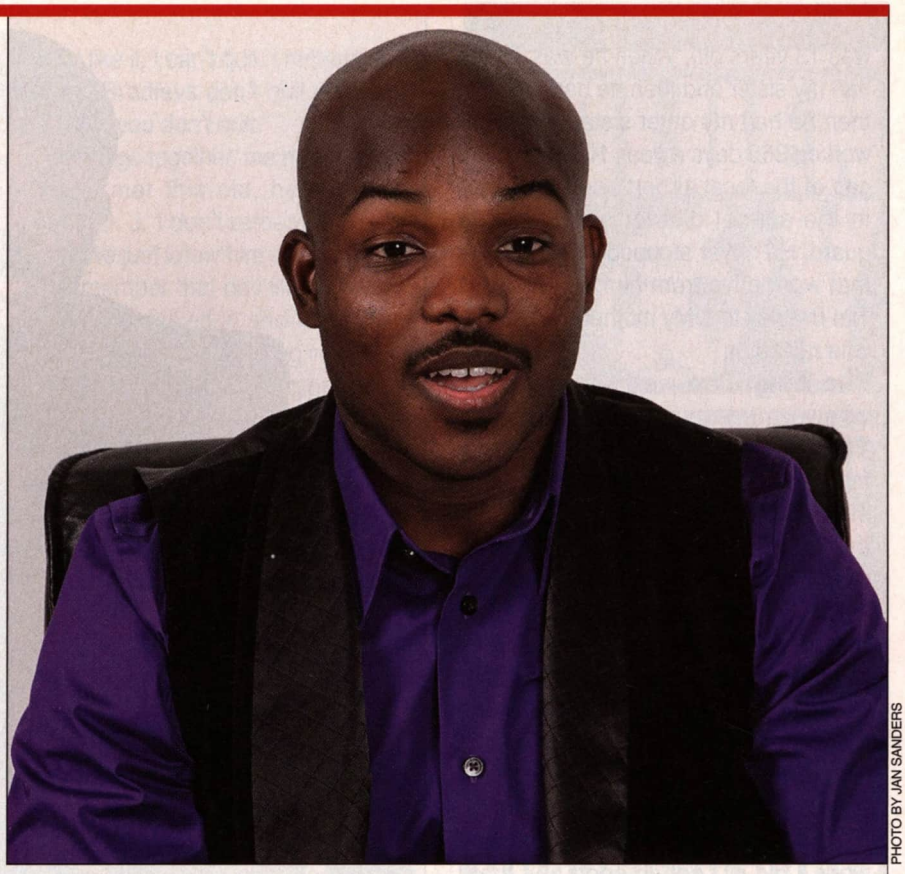


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

"I can go down the street here in Palm Springs, and someone might nod their head because I look familiar. But I go to Mexico, I'm huge over there. They were showing my fights early in my career in Mexico and other South American countries on Fox Sports. But here in the United States, other than a few appearances on *ShoBox*, my face wasn't on TV a lot."

The Ring: I have a feeling you won't ever big time anyone when you make the big money.

TB: No, not me. Not ever. You see guys making money today and they think that kind of money will always be there. When you're on top of your game, you have to make as much as you can. Some people are too naïve and they think they're everything. I don't feel that way about myself. I feel that there is always room for improvement. Boxing is something that I love to do and I'm really good at it. But I'll never become bigger than the sport of boxing. You hear guys say they're the best ever, but a lot of people can get too into themselves and they see too many articles and TV clips about themselves. That's when they lose themselves. I can make a million dollars, but I'll still be the same person. It's just how I was raised.

The Ring: We know about your history in the ring. Let's talk about your background outside the ring.

TB: I grew up in the ghetto, the hood, whatever you want to call it (*laughs*). But my father worked hard since he

was 13 years old. When he was 18, he had my sister and then he had me, and then he had my other sister. My father worked 365 days a year. He was a skycap at the local airport and he worked in the school district as a security guard. He never stopped working. I got that work ethic from him. My father is Tim Bradley too. My mother didn't work. She raised us.

The Ring: Can we assume that's where your foundation came from?

TB: Oh yeah, and it's a strong one. My father worked hard and he always told me that no one would hand me anything, I had to work for it. If I wanted something as a kid, I had to go out and collect bottles (*laughs*) or do something to earn the money. When I was five, I wanted a quad motorcycle. My father told me Christmas was eight or nine months away and every day I had to do 100 pushups and 100 sit-ups. *Every day*. He told me I had to be strong to handle that quad. Every day he got off work, I did it. I got so good at it that I used to be able to do 100 pushups then turn over and do 100 sit-ups. It's where my physique came from. My father used to lift weights and he always used to run. I used to run with him, but I always used to follow behind (*laughs*). Everything my dad did, I wanted to do.

I got my quad by the way (*laughs*). I was bad on that thing. I could have competed in motocross. I used to be on that all day long.

The Ring: When did boxing come into the picture?

TB: I used to fight all the time, every single day (*laughs*). I was six years old and I got kicked out of three elementary schools. I was an angry kid. I was a bully basically (*laughs*). I think it was my personality. I was just angry. I didn't know how to walk away. I grew up in a tough neighborhood, where you didn't back down. We fought all the time. I was a little guy, but I wasn't picked on. I was the one picking on others. That's the Napoleon Complex, I guess. Someone looked at me crazy. It was on. Let's fight. I fought over 100 fights in school. I got my butt whipped every day when I got home. I used to get beat so often with the belt, it didn't faze me anymore (*laughs*). I used to scream. If I got whupped today with a belt, you'd see a grown man holler (*laughs*).

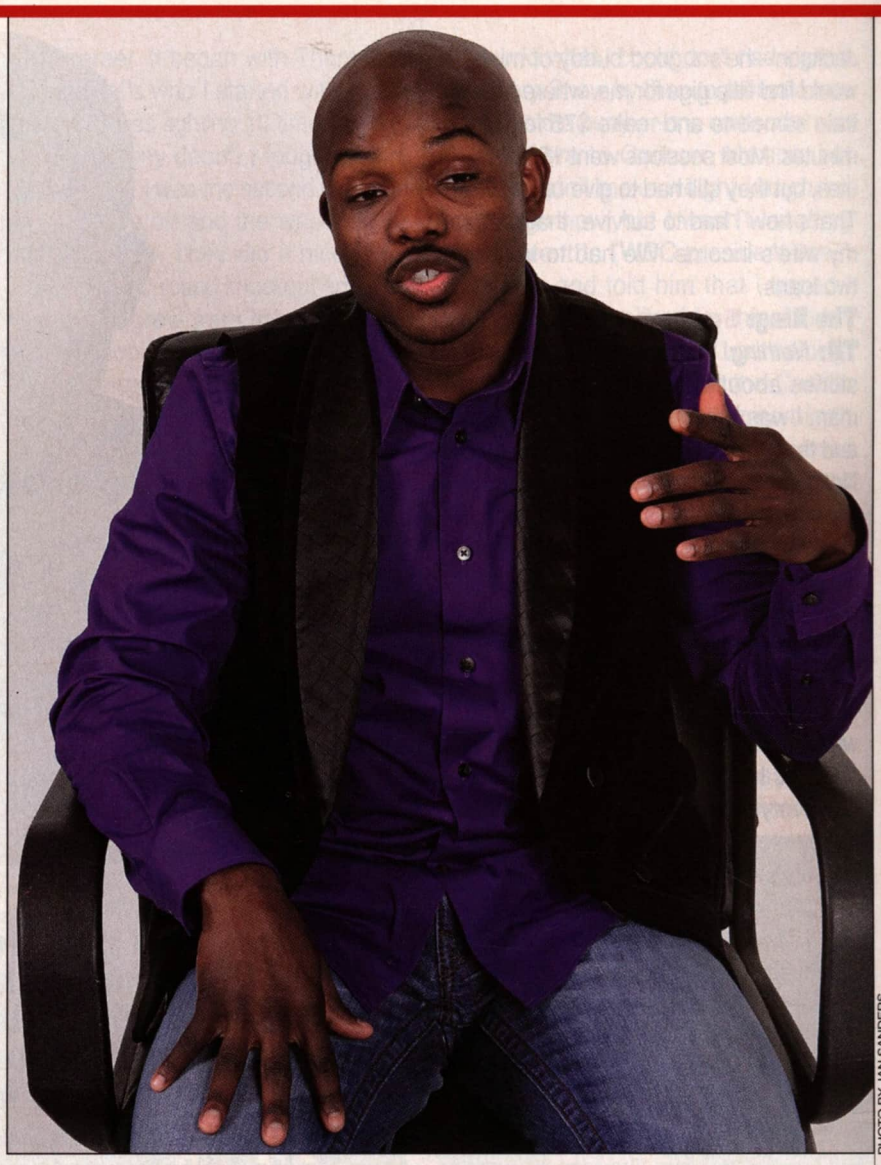


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

"You hear stories about people living like a poor man. I was living like a poor, poor man, and that can make you hungry. Not too many people know that story. There were a lot of stressful nights and we lived paycheck to paycheck. It was very stressful and we were able to get through it. But I don't know how I did it."

The Ring: How long did this go on?

TB: From new school to new school, it kept going. When I'd leave a school, well, when I was forced to leave a school (*laughs*), my sisters had to follow. It placed the whole family in a spot, because my parents wanted us together at the same school, not two separate schools. The second elementary school I went to there were a lot of Latinos. We were called everything, niggers, monkeys. They spit on us. There were like five African-Americans in the school, me, my sisters, and two of my cousins. We used to get picked on big time.

The Ring: What kind of things would happen to you?

TB: I remember one time on the monkey bars, some kid pulled me off and I landed on my head. I was crying, and the other kids were yelling that the kid who pulled me off knew karate. I stepped to him and threw a punch at him and busted his eye open, and he started crying (*laughs*).

There was another time when I playing kickball. My older sister ran up and told me about this older kid who spit in her mouth. I went over there smacked the guy up, pushed him around, and spit in his mouth. I got sent to the office again and I actually got kicked out of that school too.

That's what got me sent to a third elementary school (*laughs*). There's no excuse for what I did. I have great parents who disciplined me, but growing up in that neighborhood, I wanted to be a thug. The majority of my family was all gang bangers. Their whole persona was that you had to be hard. I wanted to be hard and to be respected. Growing up in that type of area, it's what you see around you. I used to hang around my older cousins and they were all thugs. I used to see needles on the ground. I'm looking at my cousins getting all the girls. They always had money in their pockets. I was a kid. I didn't know. That's what I used to see all the time. I had to stand up for what I thought was right (*laughs*). I'm this little kid walking around wearing the baggy pants dragging down my butt, and my parents would always tell me to pick up my pants (*laughs*). I was just a bad little kid. People see how I carry myself today and they wouldn't believe it.

The Ring: What happened when you started boxing?

TB: Boxing changed everything. I started through a friend, Julio, because we'd always slap box. It was great for me, because my father worked at the airport and the boxing club was right across the street from the airport. I just had hit 10 years old and was going into sixth grade. I started bugging my father, bugging, bugging, bugging, bugging him (*laughs*) to let me box.

What ended up happening was that my father finally said that he would take me. But I remember him also telling me that if I like it, I can't quit. I remember his words, "Bradleys don't quit. Whatever you start, you don't quit."

So we go together, me and my father, and we met this old, heavyset guy named O. J. I don't remember his last name, we just knew him as O. J.

I remember that day like it was yesterday. We walked in and I saw all the boxing memorabilia hanging in that gym. O. J. had pictures of everyone on the wall, Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Robinson, Sugar Ray Leonard. O. J. told me I kind of looked rough, like I came from the ghetto (*laughs*). He asked me if I wanted to box and he gave me an application to fill out. I wanted to get started so fast that I started to hit the bag without gloves. He told me I couldn't hit the bag without gloves. He was looking straight through me and told me right then, "You're going to be a champ." My father told him to stop playing (*laughs*). I started that day and I fell in love with it.

I was the first one in the gym and the last one to leave. The first week was fitness, but I was already able to do everything, the push-ups and sit-ups. After three weeks, I had my first amateur fight. I can imitate motions real well. I was like a sponge. The only punch I knew was the jab, and I won my first fight knowing just the jab (*laughs*). After that first fight, someone came up to my father and told him, "He's going to be better than Muhammad Ali" (*laughs*).

The Ring: Did boxing end your troubles at school?

TB: I was fighting every weekend, but I was getting bad grades in school, real bad grades. I started to get into the girls then too. I was this muscular, cute guy who boxed (*laughs*). But once my parents got my grades, I wasn't going to be the muscular, cute guy who boxed (*laughs*). I was going to be the guy who never left his house because I was being punished (*laughs*). My parents told me that if I didn't get better grades, the boxing would go. I went from straight Fs to a 3.0 (grade-point average). All I wanted to do was be at the gym.

The Ring: Did you ever stop being a bully?

TB: Yes, all the fights stopped. Before boxing, I thought I was bad, this tough

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guy who could beat up anyone (*laughs*). But when I sparred my second week training, my friend Julio kicked the crap out of me (*laughs*). The more frustrated I got, the more I got hit (*laughs*). He busted me up, I was crying, I was mad. I got out of the ring and I remember a guy who worked there, Russell Rodriguez, came up to me and told me to never get angry in boxing.

The Ring: People who see the classy way you conduct yourself today would have trouble believing these stories from your youth.

TB: If I went through a time capsule and saw that little kid, the little Tim, I'd kick my ass (*laughs*). People can't believe I was this angry kid. Boxing changed me and God put boxing in my life. Growing up with my parents, we had so many morals and so many rules. We couldn't even talk at the dinner table. When you're a kid, you want to rebel. As a kid, who likes rules (*laughs*)?

The Ring: Are any of those guys from the early days around today to enjoy your success?

TB: (*An emotional pause*) O. J. died. My father kept the roll of gauze O. J. used on my hands when I was a kid, and that gauze was hideous after 13 years (*laughs*). I used them the night I fought Witter, and O. J. was coming into the ring with me that night. O. J. was always there for me, always on me. He made sure I was doing well in school. He cared a lot. (*Another emotional pause*) Wow! I don't know. I was the kid that made it, and they knew it. That's the crazy part. They told me all the time that they saw I had talent and the work ethic.

The Ring: How much of a role do your parents play on Team Bradley?

TB: My parents are my biggest supporters. But my father will never compliment me to my face. He'll talk me up to everyone else (*laughs*), but I'll never hear anything to my face. He tells me I have to get better, and I might get a C grade after a fight. I always get a good job, but he sees a lot of mistakes (*laughs*). After the Peterson fight, he told me he was proud of me.

My mother goes to my training camp and she'll even watch me spar, taking my dad's place when he can't make it. My mother reports to my father (*laughs*). My father will tell me I got hit with too many uppercuts during sparring. I'll ask where he got that. She's the spy (*laughs*).

She'll be in there clapping in rhythm when I'm working on combinations. After the round, I'll lean over to her and she'll give me a thumbs up or thumbs down, or she'll put three fingers up, which says it's three punches with the same hand (*laughs*). My father and mother keep it real, they'll tell me when I'm not there yet. I get no breaks (*laughs*).

The Ring: Did they share your moment when you beat Witter?

TB: When I beat Witter (*emotional pause*), I saw tears in my father's eyes. We got emotional together. We came a long, long, long way. Even in my amateur days, we had nothing handed to us, but we worked through it. There was so much politics in the amateur game and we went through some hard times in the amateurs and early in my pro career. My mother kept telling me that I didn't lose the battle and keep fighting. I get all of that from my parents. They're a big part of my boxing career.

My father was once hit by a motorcycle. He got hit so hard that he came out of his shoes and came away with only a broken toe. He'd tell me "God spared my life for a reason." It's kind of ironic how things have worked out. Maybe it was to see me one day become a world champion.

The Ring: The Witter fight changed everything, didn't it?

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Bradley's arms are raised in victory following his fight with Junior Witter in Nottingham, England. The 12-round decision in Bradley's favor earned him the WBC 140-pound title and put him in a new tax bracket.

TB: It did. That put me out there. Witter was tough, but I knew Witter would get tired. I was looking for a trend, as I do in most of my fights. You can find what a fighter likes to do. I saw in the middle rounds that he likes to take time off. I knew I would lose the first four, five rounds. I even told some of the reporters that. I said that because I had to figure him out and wear him down. I wanted to touch him to the body, touch him to the body, and then start to land the overhand right. My confidence went through the roof after that. The game plan was executed very well. My trainer kept telling me to keep doing exactly what I was doing. We look for weird things in fighters and found them in Witter.

The Ring: You hear horror stories sometimes when fighters have to travel abroad. What was it like for you to go to England to fight Witter?

TB: It started as soon as I got off the plane and checked in at customs. They ask what you're there for and I told the customs guy I was here to fight Junior Witter. This guy said, "You think you stand a chance against 'The Hitter?'" (*laughs*). He laughed at me (*laughs*). He was the customs guy, welcoming me to England and asking me if I stood a chance (*laughs*)? I told the guy to remember the moment. It's funny because my trainer, Joel Diaz, told me during our team meeting before we left that they're going to try to humiliate me over there. They were going to treat me as bad as they could and (Diaz) told me not to take it personally and just smile (*laughs*).

The Ring: Things got worse?

TB: Everything that could go wrong went wrong, just like Diaz said it would (*laughs*). When we arrived at the hotel, the room wasn't ready and I was dead tired. They offered us the computer room to go to sleep. There I am getting ready to fight for a world title, the biggest fight of my life, and I'm sleeping on the computer room floor (*laughs*). I slept on that floor for two hours (*laughs*).

Then, when I finally go to the room, it's like a sauna. The air conditioner is broken (*laughs*). I had a broken AC and I was determined to stay in there. I laughed the whole weekend. I went downstairs and asked for a fan. It had to be 100, 102 degrees in that room and I was sweating every night. I didn't care.

The second day there, I go get up and go to breakfast. The only thing they had was pork, and I don't eat pork. They offered eggs, but I don't eat eggs. I asked them for oatmeal and they offered porridge (*laughs*). What am I Goldilocks? I'm a vegetarian during training, so they gave me fruit. That's all I ate the whole time over there—fruit (*laughs*). Breakfast, lunch, dinner, fruit, fruit, fruit (*laughs*).

It gets worse. They wanted to check my weight. I left home at 143 and their scale said I weighed 147 off a diet of fruit (*laughs*). Later in the day, I weighed in again and I was 145. I brought my scale from home and it was right. Their scale was off three pounds the whole week, because they wanted me to sweat down.

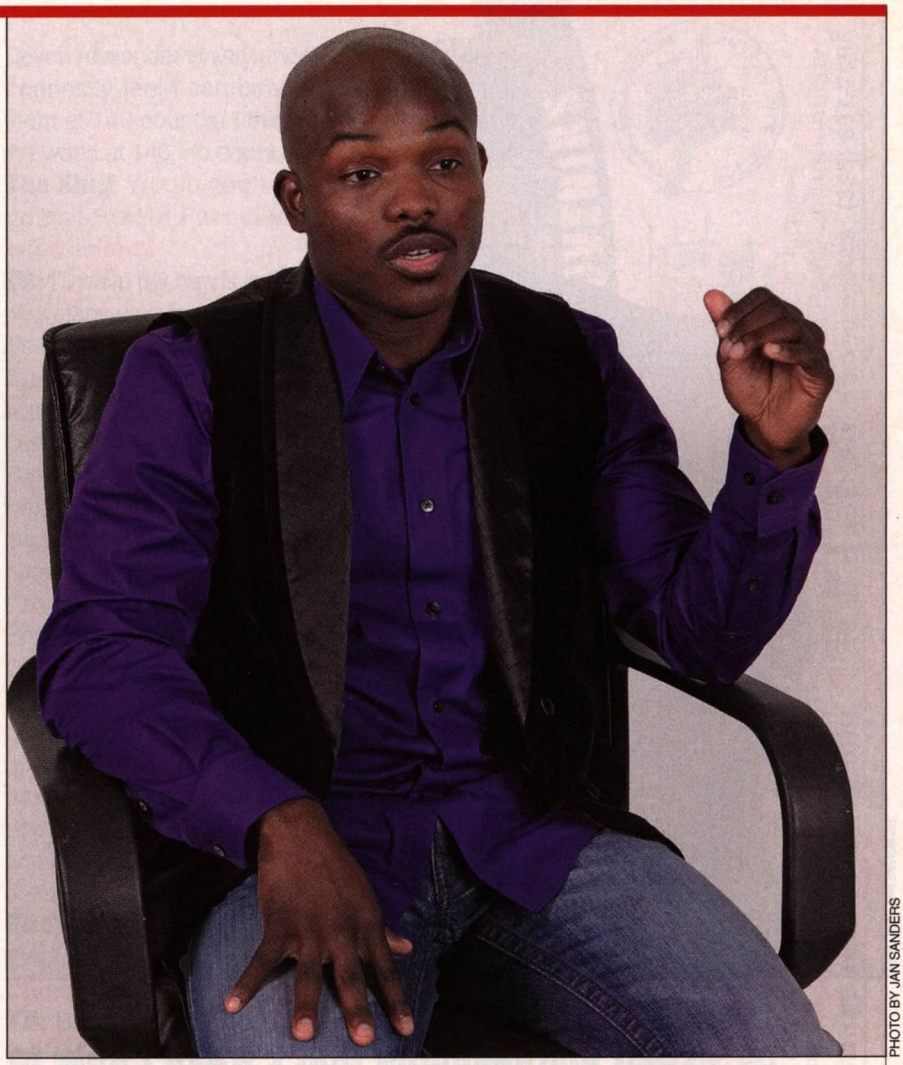

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

"If I went through a time capsule and saw that little kid, the little Tim, I'd kick my ass. People can't believe I was this angry kid. Boxing changed me and God put boxing in my life. Growing up with my parents, we had so many morals and so many rules. We couldn't even talk at the dinner table. When you're a kid, you want to rebel. As a kid, who likes rules?"

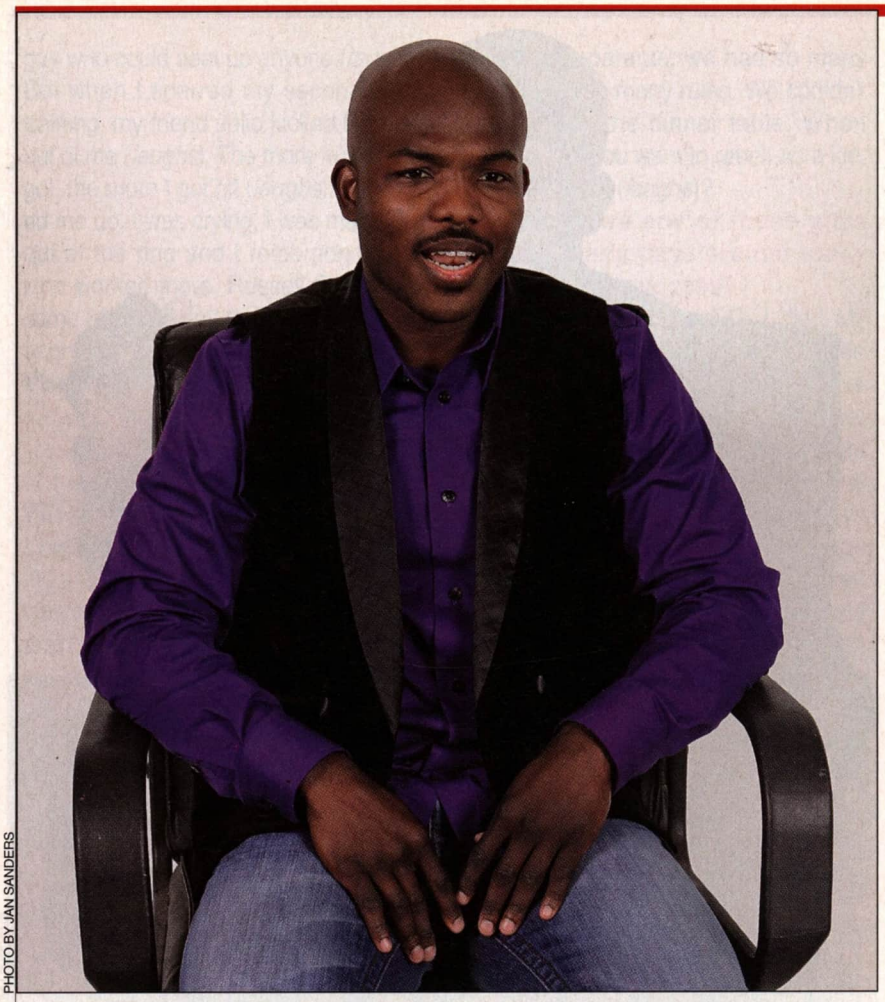

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

"I felt disrespected that I wasn't able to keep the (WBC) belt. But it's the B.S. part of the game. The sanctioning bodies ask the fighters to play on an even playing field, but they play with us on an unbalanced field. I think so. They play by different rules for different people ... it's why I want to win THE RING belt. There's no B.S. attached."

Well, fight night comes and right before I get into the ring, I hear this, "Bradley you're going to get knocked the f___ out in the first round." (*laughs*). Welcome to England (*laughs*).

The Ring: I understand you didn't get much sleep either.

TB: That was planned. Witter's people would see me playing dominos at four in the morning with my father and wonder what the heck I was doing (*laughs*). I saw (Showtime boxing analyst) Steve Farhood one time at four in the morning and he asked me "Don't you think you should be asleep?" When I went over there, I went over there with a plan. That was to stay acclimated to my time schedule at home.

Nighttime over there was daytime at home, and daytime at home was night over there. I didn't want to fight tired or drowsy. That was the perfect plan. It was something that I thought of. Junior Witter's people saw me and they thought they were going to knock me out.

The Ring: You go through all of that, win the WBC belt, and then the WBC took it away. What happened?

TB: I felt that my mandatory, Devon Alexander, wasn't worthy to fight me; he didn't go through the proper steps. They wanted me to fight Devon and I wanted to face a tougher challenge, like Kendall Holt. Boxing is not the same for everybody. Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather never have to face a mandatory and they're still able to keep their titles. I had to make a promise to the WBC that when I got the title, I was going to vacate it. I told them I would vacate the belt. I wanted the Kendall Holt fight.

I felt disrespected that I wasn't able to keep the belt. But it's the B.S. part of the game. The sanctioning bodies ask the fighters to play on an even playing field, but they play with us on an unbalanced field. I think so. They play by different rules for different people. I'd love to have all the belts, but I just feel fighters have to fight the best fighters out there. If you want to throw a mandatory at me, go ahead, as long and they're worthy. I had to go to Mexico and face fat-butt Castillo (*laughs*). I had to go through all the weigh-in process and he didn't. It's unfair.

In the end, the WBC got dirty and said I wrote a letter to them saying that I was going to keep the belt and vacate the WBO title I had, and that I'm all about the WBC. The letter said it's the only belt I would fight for. I never even wrote them a letter. They made the letter public. It made me look bad. I still have love for the WBC. I forgive, but I don't forget. I thanked them for the opportunity to fight for the title and they stabbed me in the back. These sanctioning bodies do what they want do. I wasn't respected at all. I think I am now. It's why I want to win THE RING belt. There's no B.S. attached. You earn it, you win it.

The Ring: What's been the toughest fight of your career and why?

TB: Kendall Holt might have been my toughest fight. Holt had the tools to beat me: height, reach, power, speed, great counterpunching. He knocked me down for the first time in my life. I always put it in my head that if I was to lose, I was going out guns blazing. I'm going to die before I lose. I'm swinging and when Holt

knocked me down, it was either my family or his that was going to eat. I stuck to the game plan. Every time he hit me it hurt, but I didn't care. I looked at the fight and I looked at his style. He's kind of tricky and it was hard finding a right game plan for him.

The last time I watched a tape of Kendall, I saw that pressure bothers him. If I stayed on top of him, he wouldn't know what to do. When I attacked, I got knocked on my butt, but I came back and attacked again. I had to be in his face. When I got inside, I got dirty with him; he could never sit back and think. It was the game plan and it worked beautifully.

The Ring: How do you see the junior welterweight class?

TB: Right now with the way things are going, I feel that I'm the number-one fighter at 140 pounds. I fought better opposition than any of the other ranked junior welters in the world. All the belt-holders feel they are worthy champions. Khan is a very good fighter; Holt is still in there. But Ricky Hatton, I just don't think his heart is in it anymore. His life is his son and he cares a lot more about that.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Bradley says that Kendall Holt (pictured) gave him the toughest fight of his pro career and that the New Jersey boxer-puncher hurt him with every clean punch he landed. But Bradley came off the floor to rally back and tally a unanimous 12-round decision and the WBO junior welter strap.

Devon Alexander is very underrated, but I honestly feel I can beat any one of them at 140 pounds. I think I'm best in the world at 140, no doubt.

The Ring: Would you have stepped up and fought Pacquiao if you had been asked?

TB: I'll wave my hands in the air and ask how many days for drug testing (*laughs*). It's not even about the money. I want to fight the best fighter in the world and I want to see if I can beat him. Manny is human just like I am. I want to see if I can beat him. All I ask is an opportunity. What do I have to do? Jump off a building. I worked my butt off to get to the number-one spot just to fight him. But I don't want to see Joshua Clottey and Pacquiao. It's a joke. Miguel Cotto beat Clottey, and Pacquiao crushed Cotto. So what do you think Pacquiao will do to Clottey? It's a matter of time that the guys who don't want to fight me will one day fight me. If Floyd Mayweather doesn't retire before I fight him, I'll be the first man to beat him. I don't want to be cocky; I'm just being real.

The Ring: You're one of the few world-class fighters who holds his training camp at home. Why?

TB: Because I eat, sleep, and breathe boxing. I can discipline myself. I don't have the problem of losing control, because I'm not influenced by society and friends. My entourage is my family, and it's a close-knit family. I'm not out there like that. It's why I can train at home. I don't have 8 million people pulling at me. I don't let the leeches in my circle. I get asked all of the time to hang out. The ladies don't bother me because the first thing I do is start talking about my wife. I tell them "My wife and I go over here and here," and they take a step back and leave. I had a woman approach me one time and tell me I was the best thing she ever saw. I told her I didn't think my wife would like that (*laughs*). That shut her down. That's why I'm able to train at home. I don't have to get away from anything; people around here know I'm about business. I don't even answer my phone when I'm training. I'm still able to sleep in my bed next to my strong woman.

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PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Bradley is not very enthusiastic about the upcoming Pacquiao-Clottey match. "It's a joke," he said. "Miguel Cotto beat Clottey, and Pacquiao crushed Cotto. So what do you think Pacquiao will do to Clottey?"

The Ring: How important is your wife, Monica, to Team Bradley?

TB: Monica has been part of Team Bradley for three years now. Before Monica, you can say I was in the circus; I was out there. I haven't always been a good boy. This is a recent transition with everything. I used to go out on patrol (*laughs*). This was early in my career when I was coming up. I wasn't always as disciplined as I am now. I used to do a lot of crazy things. When I met her, she was a single mother raising two children and holding it down. She's still working, and she doesn't have to work. I call her kids my kids. I helped raise them. I feed them and clothe them. Monica has changed my life.

The Ring: In what way?

TB: She showed me what a good woman is supposed to do. We went to high school together. We knew each other, but we didn't talk. I'm a long-term relationship type of dude. She was with someone for seven years. So three years ago, I was working at this restaurant and I saw Monica there with a friend of hers. I always thought she was so attractive. I had to say something (*laughs*). She told me she was divorced. I also remember what else Monica said to me then, "So when are you going to leave your girl for me?"

I wasn't about to talk bad about the woman I was with at the time, but it was a crazy relationship. I told my friend that if I wasn't in a relationship, I would marry that girl Monica tomorrow. A few months later, I went through a crazy breakup and I went to visit my father. I saw Monica and found out she worked at the same school where my father was a security guard. We exchanged numbers and that night she called and asked me to go out with her. I waited on her return call and she never called back. I was wondering what's up? I saw her the next day and she told me she lost her cell phone.

After that, we went out and we just came together. She doesn't smoke. She doesn't drink. She does it all. She has awesome kids and I was like, "I'm at home." She's an amazing woman and she's supported me through the hard times, because we went through some rough, rough times. I'm trying to stop her from working right now. I want to send her back to school; she wants to be a teacher. My goal is for her to reach her goal and become a teacher, because she helped me reach my goal. I'm a changed man. I dropped all of my friends. Once I did that, better things happened. I'm in bed at 8:30 every night and I come home to a cooked meal. It's awesome.

The Ring: The two of you had to wade through a pile of boxing politics to reach this point. How did you manage that?

TB: You said it, a pile (*laughs*). I'd be lying if I said I wasn't frustrated. I think about getting that big fight, and I think it will happen. But it will happen when God says. That's what I believe. I would love to fight these guys. I feel I deserve the opportunity. I've done everything I had to do to earn it. I'm ranked number-one in THE RING. I have the WBO belt. What more do I need to do?

The Ring: Were there times when you felt like giving up?

TB: Absolutely, absolutely, but when I was younger. One time in Trenton (New Jersey), I was in this amateur tournament trying to get a spot at the Olympic Trials. I made the semifinals. I was around 18, 19 going up against a grown man. We were even going into the last round, so I came out guns blazing and I went at him. I was landing 20, 30 clear punches on this guy's face. I thought I had it and people are chanting my name. But when it comes down to the scorecards, I lost the fight. I couldn't believe what I heard. They gave the guy the last round.

I got out of the ring and I went up to the president of the amateur association that was sponsoring the fight. I was yelling at everyone. I went back to my hotel room and cried. I wanted to compete in the Olympics and that was my chance and I got robbed. I was getting ready to check out the next morning and the girl at the checkout counter asked me what was wrong. I had this look on my face. I told her I was ready to quit boxing. I was hurt by what happened. This was a complete stranger I was talking to, but I wasn't ashamed to tell her what was in my head. Then she told me "God has something in store for you." That made me stop. I thought that this was my mother (*laughs*). I told her that's what my mother tells me all the time.

When I got back home and told my mom that I was getting ready to quit, that I was done with boxing. She told me to take a couple of weeks off. A couple of weeks past; I got back in the gym. That experience definitely made me a lot stronger. It taught me to take rejection a lot better. It's why I'm able to hear the things I hear today, like I don't hit hard enough, that I'm too short. I hear it all and store it.

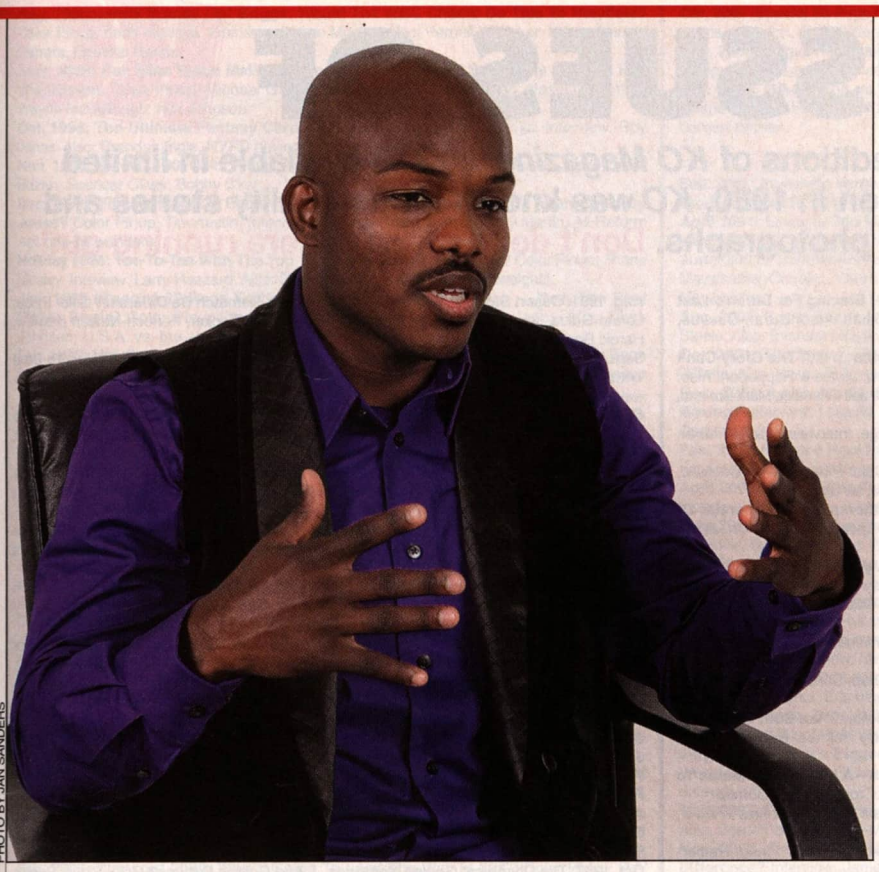

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

"I don't have to have a gimmick to be a success, I just be me and let my boxing do my talking. I pride myself on being a down-to-earth type of dude. If I make $1- or $2-million, I'll still eat at Denny's."

The Ring: What's it like working and still trying to maintain a professional career as a fighter? I understand you own an auto shop.

TB: It's called B&M Tire and Auto. I bought that in October and I have no background whatsoever in auto mechanics (*laughs*). But I do love cars and souping up cars. I just felt it was the right thing to do. My brother-in-law Chris spoke to me about it. He had a vision and we took a gamble. Chris is running the shop right now. When I'm training for a fight, my brother-in-law is there and he handles the show. Buying it was a good move. It adds another income to the house. People are always getting their cars fixed.

The Ring: So if I pulled up to B&M, I could get my tires checked and brakes changed by a world-class fighter?

TB: Oh yeah (*laughs*). I just like to work. I'll change your brakes and oil. I'll put an alternator in. It's awesome. I don't mind getting my hands dirty.

The Ring: Any other outside interests of late?

TB: Recently, I was out picking up trash out by the stadium. I do it every year as part of the Junior All-American League, which is like Pop Warner football in this area. I'm the president of the league and we had two teams go to the Super Bowl. We had over 160 kids out this year. After events, we have to clean up and I do everything from sell burritos to cut the grass and work the snack bar. People ask me why I'm doing these things, and I tell them I'm a normal human being like everyone else. I'm not someone who sells himself as loud and boisterous. I don't have to have a gimmick to be a success, I just be me and let my boxing do my talking. I pride myself on being a down-to-earth type of dude. If I make $1- or $2-million, I'll still eat at Denny's.

The Ring: Does the auto shop and the football interfere with training?

TB: When it's time to train, there is nothing but training. But there were a few times during my last training camp, I did sneak over to the shop (*laughs*). It's nothing that I have to do; it's something that I choose to do. I do my running in the morning. When I want to go to my shop, I go down there and get into some business. I'm able to separate the two things. The shop is like a get-away for me. If I'm home, I'm watching boxing, studying films, doing something involved with boxing. Working at the shop relaxes me, gets my mind off a fight.

The Ring: Everyone deals with success differently. How are you dealing with it?

TB: I'm scared because everything has happened so quickly. I was in bad shape two years ago. I'm successful today. There is a lot of pressure that comes with it, and I put a lot of pressure on myself. I don't want to be a failure. I thought about developing ways to get stronger mentally.

I'm thinking about actually seeing how it feels to be a homeless person for a few weeks. I'm serious. That would motivate me. I want to go out there in the streets somewhere without any money in my pocket, where no one knows me. That would probably put me over the edge, seeing and being with people who have nothing. I think something like that would make me appreciate success that much more. I fear being at the bottom. I'm near the top and I don't want to fall off. I want to remain here. I almost think that all of this isn't real. Just two years ago, I was dead broke and didn't have anything. What would motivate someone like a Floyd Mayweather? He has all the money in the world. I want to go deeper to keep myself motivated. I want to go that little extra. Going through things is what built me. I want to keep hungry. ■

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Oct. 1984: Golden Boy Mark Breland: Can He Be The Next Sugar Ray? Color Pinup: Jaime Garza. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Bramble-Mancini, Sugar Ray Leonard.

Feb. 1985: Gerry Cooney: How Far Can He Go This Time? Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Ray Mancini. Also: Dream fights, Hector Camacho.

May 1985: Thomas Hearns: *KO* Fighter Of The Year. Color Pinup: Gerry Cooney. Also: Camacho-Ramirez, Truth Williams, Year In Review.

July 1985: Aaron Pryor: Has Hawk Time Run Out? Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Greg Page. Also: Ray Mancini, James Shuler, Costello-Hatcher.

Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!" Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

Oct. 1985: Still Champ After All These Years: Larry Holmes—A Legend Continues To Grow. Interview: Mark Breland. Also: Michael Spinks, Milton McCrory, Wilfredo Gomez.

Nov. 1985: McGuigan! The Pluck Of The Irish. Also: Julio Cesar Chavez, Thomas-Weaver, Donald Curry, featherweights.

Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing." Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

Feb. 1986: King Michael: How Long Will He Rule The Heavyweights? Also: Barry McGuigan, Shawn O'Sullivan, Spinks-Holmes, *Rocky IV*, world's best fighter poll.

Oct. 1986: They're Back!!! The Cooney Circus Returns. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Jimmy Paul, Mike Tyson, Donald Curry.

Dec. 1986: Larry Holmes' Message To Mike Tyson: "Show Me You Can Kick My Butt!" Color pinup: Mark Breland. Interview: Holmes. Also: Witherspoon-Bruno, Evander Holyfield, Cruz-McGuigan, Danny Lopez.

Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era? Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

June 1987: New WBA Welterweight Champion Mark Breland: He's Got A Lot To Smile About. Interview: Marvin Hagler. Color Pinup: Greg Haugen. Also: Michael Olajide, Carlos Monzon.

Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO's* Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why? Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

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Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

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May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

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Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

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Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

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Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

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Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

Aug. 2002: Still Crazy After All These Years: Should Mike Tyson Be Allowed To Fight? Interview: Kostya Tszyu. Also: Barrera-Morales II preview, Ayala-Adams, Ricky Hatton.

Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

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Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

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Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

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Feb. 2006: Can Hip Hop Revitalize Boxing? Interview: Erik Morales. Also: Zab Judah, Ricardo Mayorga, Arturo Gatti, Luis Collazo, Roman Karmazin.

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FRANK MALONEY

He's Made A Career Of Bouncing Back

By Gavin Evans

Frank Maloney has an unusual quality for a boxing promoter: He's not above a little chuckle at his own misfortune. This capacity for self-deprecation—for acknowledging mistakes and having fun at his own expense—sets him apart from his British rivals, helping to make him an endearing figure among his country's fight pundits and punters. And he certainly needed it last year.

Speaking to THE RING from his headquarters in Chisleworth, London (five minutes from his home), Maloney recalls how 2009 started off as a year of great promise and considerable investment. His junior middleweight star Jamie Moore knocked out Michele Piccirillo for the European title and was heading for a WBC title shot. His junior featherweight Rendall Munroe and bantamweight Ian Napa were European champions, and he had a deep well of talent homing in on domestic honors. He also signed Olympic middleweight bronze medalist Darren Sutherland—spending a small fortune promoting the Irishman's Dublin debut—and followed this by securing Britain's Olympic light heavyweight bronze medalist Tony Jeffries and a string of other amateur stars.

Sutherland, who'd won four out of six bouts against the Olympic gold medalist James DeGale, particularly delighted him. "I set my heart on Darren the moment I saw him," said Maloney. "His style was perfectly suited to the professional game and I felt sure he'd win a world title. Then I got Tony, who has a huge following in Sunderland, and I had a vision of building towards a massive fight there and a return in Dublin—like Eubank and Benn."

Then, suddenly, Maloney's luck turned, to the point where his life hung by a thread and his burgeoning promotional empire was imperiled.

The first hint of trouble came in August 2009 with a call from his sports physiotherapist, Joe Dunbar, who expressed concern about Sutherland. "I had no inkling of how serious it was," said Maloney, "but he did seem to be depressed, so I had a number of meetings with him."

Meanwhile, Maloney had a big bill in Brentwood, where his English heavyweight champion John McDermott was defending against the hot 21-year-old, Tyson Fury. Maloney was convinced that after 30 fights McDermott would be too experienced for the 7-0 (7) Fury and won the purse bid.

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

As usual, he was positioned near his man's corner. "The venue was packed, the atmosphere fantastic, and I was engrossed," Maloney recalled. "Then I felt pain and stress across my chest, and I felt light headed, but I didn't want any attention on me to detract from the fight, so I dropped to one knee, drank some water, and felt slightly better—enough to do some more shouting."

Most ringsiders gave it to McDermott by two points, but the referee (and sole scorer), Terry O'Connor, raised Fury's hand—a six-point winner.

Maloney exploded. "I saw red and made some outrageous comments to Terry and kicked some chairs, and at the same time I had this tightening in my chest again. It was still hurting."

A friend took him to the pub, but he could only manage a cup of tea.

"I went home, crashed out, and woke on Saturday morning in a very bad mood, but my chest felt better," said Maloney. "That evening I went out for a meal with my family and Darren. I noticed he was very quiet, so I invited him around for Sunday lunch, but he didn't come."

Maloney made an appointment for Sutherland to see a counselor, but, again, he didn't turn up. Eventually, he and Dunbar went to the boxer's flat and when no one answered they got the caretaker to open the door and found Darren's body, hanging by a rope.

Maloney watches welterweight Craig Watson en route to a kayo of Ali Nuumbembe from his usual corner seat. Maloney was in a similar position at the Tyson Fury-John McDermott fight when he suffered a heart attack.

"I started speaking to him, but Joe said, 'It's no use, Frank, he's dead' and I just looked at him, and went into a daze."

The next thing Maloney knew was that he was in an ambulance.

After conducting an ECG test, the specialist told him he'd had a heart attack (at ringside, in fact), a result of blocked arteries and a damaged heart muscle. His heart stopped on the operating table, but they revived him and inserted three stents to open the arteries.

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

Darren Sutherland has his arm raised in victory at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. The gifted Irishman was undefeated under Maloney's guidance and expected to have a great pro career, but then tragedy struck when Sutherland committed suicide.

PHOTO BY JACQUES DEMARTHON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

None of this deterred the mercurial promoter, who ran his business from his hospital ward. "It was like Piccadilly Circus. I had my whole staff there and my laptop on all the time." Aside from dealing with the fallout from Sutherland's suicide, he was busy signing up Olympic super heavyweight bronze medalist David Price. The doctors recommended six months off work; instead he discharged himself after four days.

A week later Jamie Moore, the WBC's number-two contender, defended his European title against his leading local rival Ryan Rhodes, a fight the WBC recognized as an eliminator. Maloney had accepted the Rhodes fight because he felt it would be a big money-spinner.

"I made a mistake," he admitted. "I'd taken my eye off the ball and it cost me a considerable amount of money. We put on a mega bill, which didn't draw like we'd hoped." To make matters worse, the weight-drained Moore was stopped in seven.

Friends suggested putting his business into receivership, but instead Maloney claimed on a personal injuries policy, threw in some of his own savings, and the little man who'd made a career of bouncing back did it again.

As usual, he was positioned near his man's corner. "The venue was packed, the atmosphere fantastic, and I was engrossed," Maloney recalled. "Then I felt pain and stress across my chest, and I felt light headed, but I didn't want any attention on me to detract from the fight, so I dropped to one knee, drank some water, and felt slightly better—enough to do some more shouting."

Most ringsiders gave it to McDermott by two points, but the referee (and sole scorer), Terry O'Connor, raised Fury's hand—a six-point winner.

Maloney exploded. "I saw red and made some outrageous comments to Terry and kicked some chairs, and at the same time I had this tightening in my chest again. It was still hurting."

A friend took him to the pub, but he could only manage a cup of tea.

"I went home, crashed out, and woke on Saturday morning in a very bad mood, but my chest felt better," said Maloney. "That evening I went out for a meal with my family and Darren. I noticed he was very quiet, so I invited him around for Sunday lunch, but he didn't come."

Maloney made an appointment for Sutherland to see a counselor, but, again, he didn't turn up. Eventually, he and Dunbar went to the boxer's flat and when no one answered they got the caretaker to open the door and found Darren's body, hanging by a rope.

"I started speaking to him, but Joe said, 'It's no use, Frank, he's dead' and I just looked at him, and went into a daze."

The next thing Maloney knew was that he was in an ambulance.

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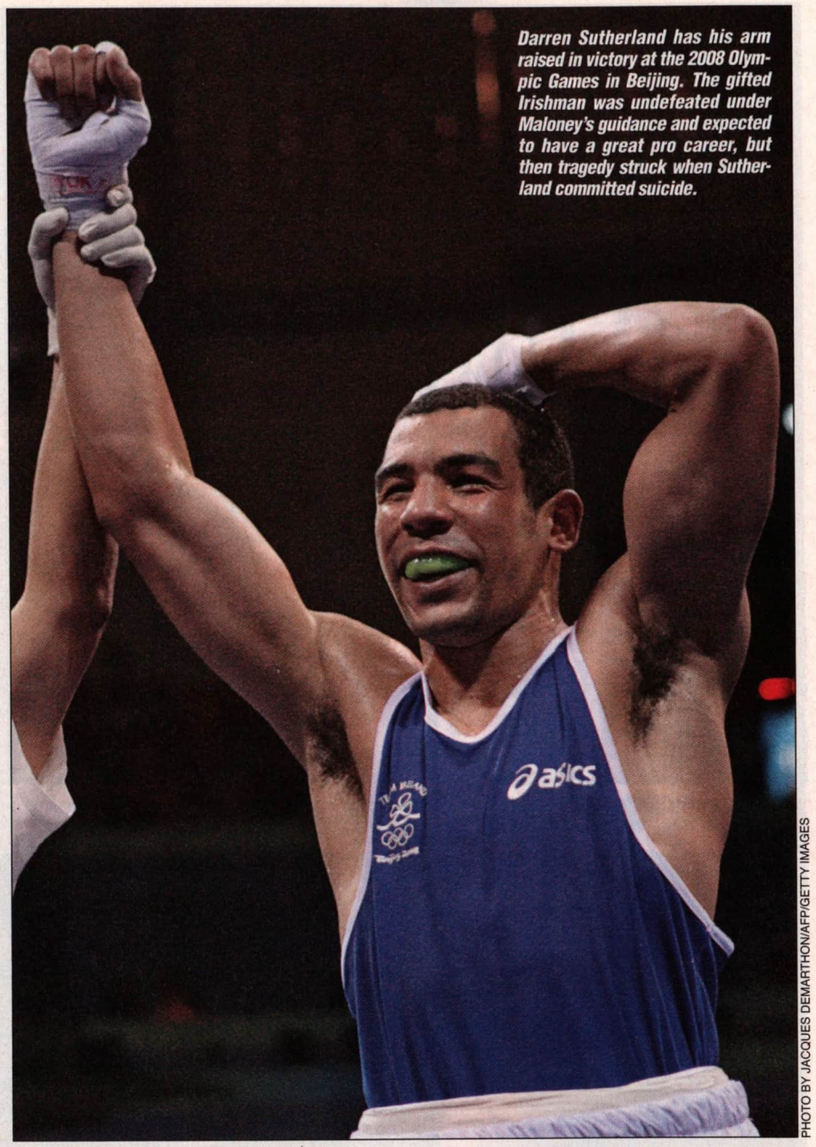
Maloney watches welterweight Craig Watson en route to a kayo of Ali Nuumbembe from his usual corner seat. Maloney was in a similar position at the Tyson Fury-John McDermott fight when he suffered a heart attack.

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON



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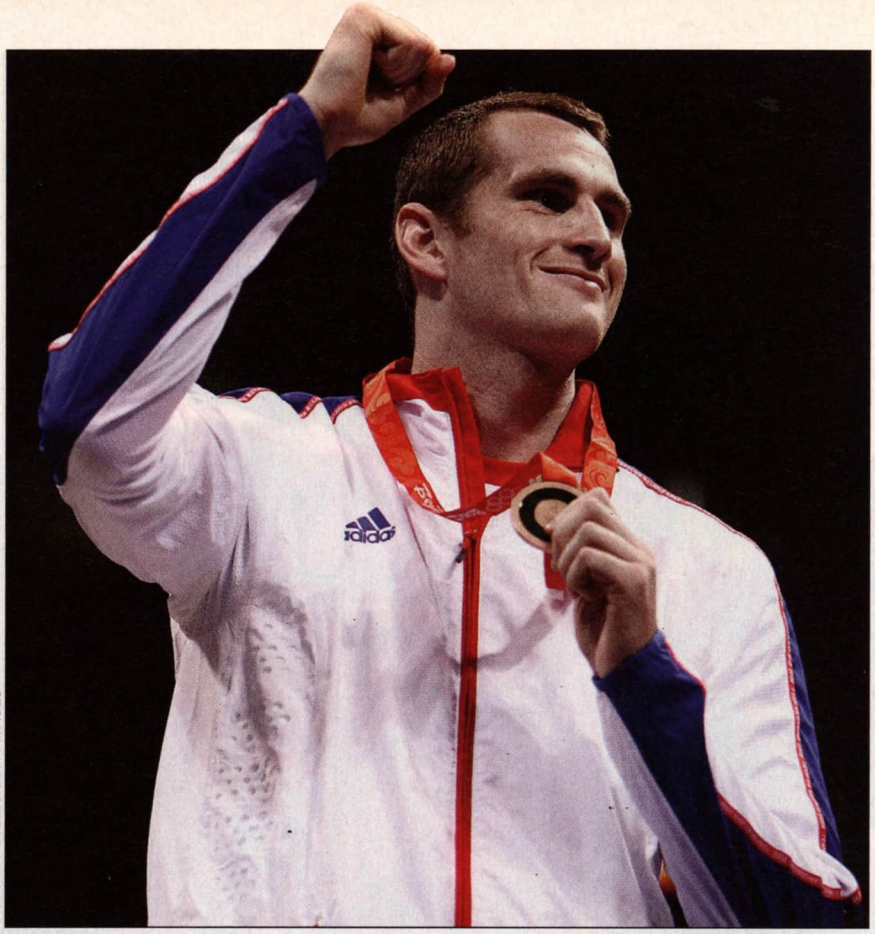

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Maloney signed heavyweight David Price to a professional contract while the promoter was still in the hospital recovering from his heart attack. Price won a bronze medal at the 2008 Olympics.

He returned with three more televised cards over the next two months, with all of his stars prevailing, including his British junior bantamweight champion, Lee Haskins, who won the Commonwealth title by outpointing the previously unbeaten Don Broadhurst, a prospect promoted by Maloney's premier rival, Frank Warren.

"That gave me satisfaction, because there's always an extra edge when Maloney and Warren are up against each other," Maloney said.

Maloney's premier interest is the heavyweight division. In addition to David Price, he's signed another former amateur star, the 6'6", 230-pound Tom Dallas, who is currently 8-0 (6). But his biggest achievers are little men like Haskins. Top of the pile is the 20-1 (8) Rendall Munroe, who after two years as European champion, is about to face a final eliminator for the WBC belt. This powerfully built dustman is well schooled, tough, and impeccably conditioned.

"He's huge for the weight, but makes it comfortably because of his lifestyle," said Maloney. "He has a very good chance of winning the title."

PHOTO BY IAN WATSON/GETTY IMAGES

Maloney sits with Lennox Lewis and Panos Eliades in 1999 at a London press conference following Lewis victory over Evander Holyfield. Maloney managed Lewis for much of his career, but the pair parted company after Lewis successfully sued Eliades for civil fraud.

Ian Napa celebrates his October 2008 decision over Carmelo Ballone for the European bantamweight title. Napa lost the Euro belt in his next bout.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Other fighters in his stable include British junior featherweight champion Jason Booth and British bantamweight champion Napa.

Maloney himself was once a promising amateur flyweight who considered turning professional until he realized the money went to bigger stars. He was a dyslexic lad from the East End of London, with no school qualifications, and his main talent was hustling of one kind or another, which he combined with spells as a jockey, chef, greengrocer, caterer, and publican. He broke into professional boxing by working as a trainer for Frank Warren, but they split up and he moved on to small hall promoting, while serving as matchmaker for Mickey Duff.

But Maloney always had his eye on the big time, which arrived in 1989 when he engineered a deal with the

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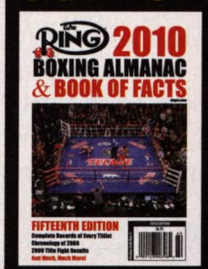

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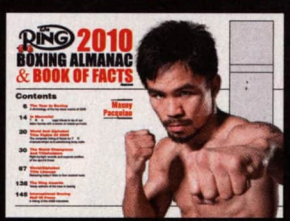

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business mogul Roger Levitt to manage Lennox Lewis. Two years later, it fell apart when the Levitt Group collapsed, but Maloney survived by bringing in business liquidator Panos Eliades. He continued managing Lewis, while working as a promoter for Eliades' Panix Promotions, taking Paul Ingle (IBF) and Scott Harrison (WBO) to featherweight titles, while promoting the early careers of John Ruiz and Nikolay Valuev.

Along the way, Maloney achieved the kind of fame and fortune he'd dreamed of as a lad, but the wheels began to come off in 2001. First, he split with Lewis and then Panix Promotions closed after Lewis successfully sued Eliades for civil fraud. Maloney accepted an offer to work for Frank Warren, which he now says was "not one of my wisest decisions."

Four years ago, he branched out again, this time using his own capital. One of his first signings was David Haye, who was rebuilding after a shock loss against Carl Thompson. Maloney took him to the world cruiserweight title and a successful defense against Warren's WBO titlist Enzo Maccarinelli. Haye's contract ended, and the boxer opted to promote himself, but Maloney remained busy, regularly promoting two televised shows a month.

British boxing has long had a single, dominant promoter—Mickey Duff, Barry Hearn and, over the last decade or so, Frank Warren. But Warren has lost ground through the departure of leading stars like Ricky Hatton, Joe Calzaghe, and Amir Khan, courtroom defeats at the hands of Calzaghe (after which his promotional company, Sports Network, went into administration), and losing his television hegemony.

Several other promoters are now barking at his heels. Calzaghe and Hatton have their own promotional outfits, but a more serious contender is Mick Hennessy, who promotes Carl Froch, Junior Witter, and rising prospects such as British lightweight champion John Murray, 28-0 (16), Commonwealth middleweight champion Darren Barker, 21-0 (14), British junior welterweight titleholder Lenny Daws, 20-1-1, and the 21-year-old Tyson Fury, 9-0 (7). And Hearn has returned to the fray with his extremely popular "Prizefighter" series and the promotion of Audley Harrison.

However, when it comes to number of boxers under contract, and ability to promote regular, televised shows, Maloney is now Warren's premier challenger. He believes the battle will be settled by their young talent. "The first promoter who can produce a superstar out of his 2008 Olympic boxers and other young talent, will win," Maloney said. It goes without saying that he feels he has the edge.

PHOTO BY IAN WATSON/GETTY IMAGES

Maloney shakes hands with Frank Warren as their stable of boxers looks on. The partnership with Warren was formed in 2000 but did not endure.

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

Maloney chats with campaign workers in January 2010. The manager/promoter is running in May's national election, hoping to represent London's Barking constituency in Parliament. Frank got the ball rolling by challenging his opponent, Nick Griffin, to a charity boxing match.

He raves about the potential of the 6'8", 245-pound Price. "He's already the best heavyweight prospect in Britain, above Tyson Fury. Once he starts believing in his power, he'll go all the way. And I think Tom Dallas can definitely reach British and European level."

His other batch of fighters range between middleweight and light heavyweight, starting with 24-year-old light heavy Tony Jeffries, who is 5-0 (4) as a professional.

"He's already a superstar in the northeast of England, selling out venues every time he fights because he has this rugged, down-to-earth personality. He wants to please the crowds, and he wants to hurt people. And they love him up there."

Also in Maloney's stable is the 21-year-old George Groves, a former British amateur champion who once beat De Gale, the big-hitting light heavy Travis Dickinson, who once beat Groves, and the 23-year-old former junior Olympic champion Tony Hill.

"By the end of 2010, I want my prospects to be closing in on domestic honors," he said. "I want Napa, Booth, and Haskins to be European champions, Moore to get back to the top at middleweight, and Munroe to be a world champion."

This ebullient, 55-year-old father of three also wants to put in a solid performance himself, when he stands for the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party in the national election in May 2010. He's campaigning in London's Barking constituency and recently courted publicity by publicly challenging another candidate, the far-right leader, Nick Griffin, to a charity boxing match.

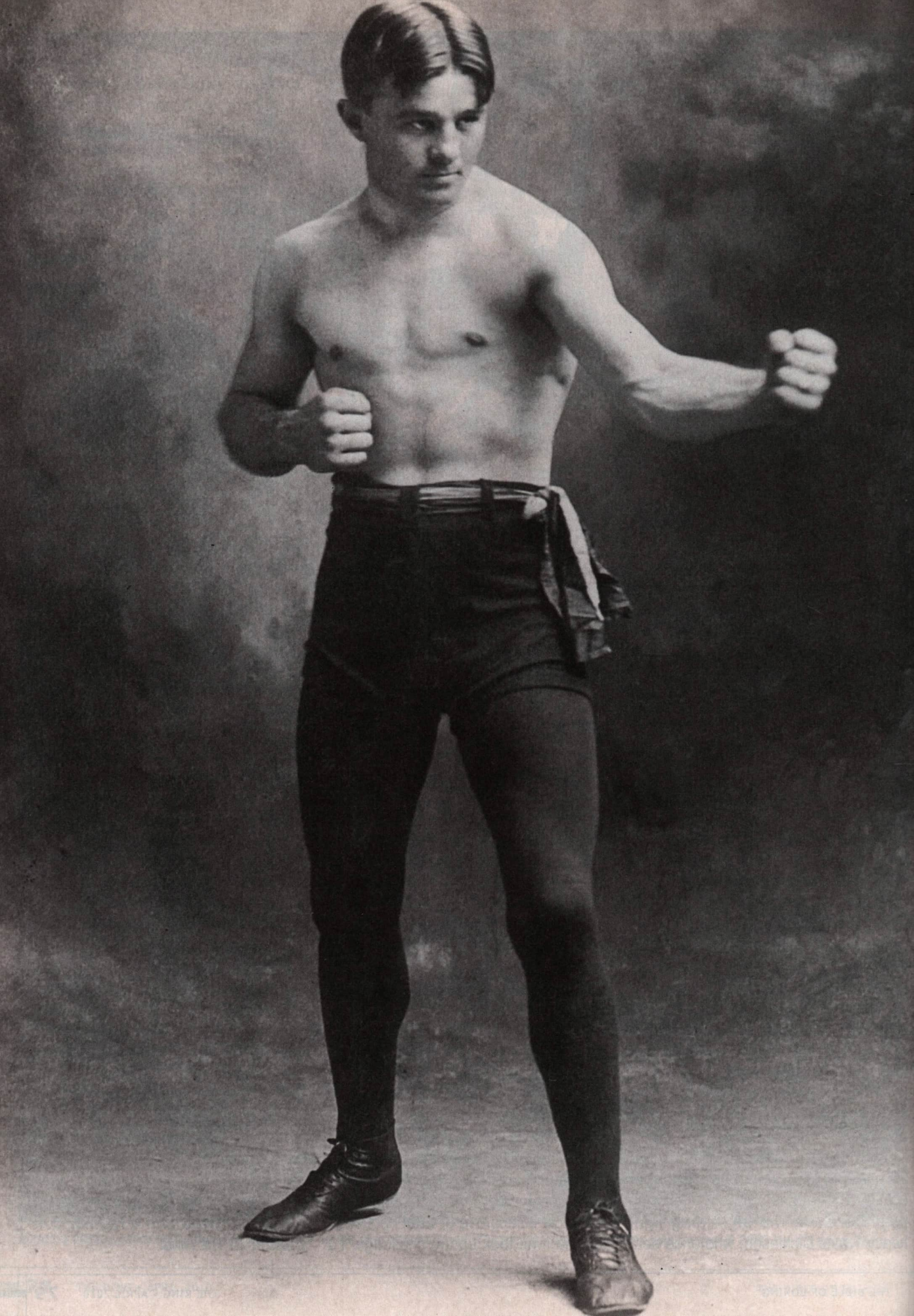
"I research all of my opponents," said Maloney, "and discovered that in addition to heading a modern-day Nazi party, Griffin is a former amateur heavyweight. I strongly disapprove of what he stands for and if he took up the challenge, I'd fight him." He chuckles for a bit and then adds: "Of course, when I do things like this, it gets a lot of media attention."

But while politics is an abiding interest, boxing is his life, and he likes the way it looks right now. "It's changed for the better because these days you've got to give value to the public. Here in Britain, Sky (TV) is making sure of that. It's not like the bad old days."

Despite that dodgy ticker and all the stress of last year, Maloney figures he'll be at the forefront of the British fight game for a good while to come, always relishing the challenge and always up for a laugh.

"You see," he said, "it's not a hardship for me to get up in the morning because I love what I do, boxing will always be my passion." ■

Gavin Evans is a London-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to THE RING.



"SMILING BILLY" PAPKE

He Saved The Last Bullet For Himself

By Don Stradley

It was mid July, 1910, when 20-year-old Edna Eloise Pulver, the socialite daughter of a prominent Canadian family, created a mild sensation by eloping with Billy Papke, the former middleweight boxing champion. Edna's father had strongly opposed the union, even arranging a European vacation for her and her mother, hoping three months away from Papke would cool her passions. When Papke learned this, he raced from his home in Kewanee, Illinois, to the Pulver home in Hamilton, Ontario. When he arrived at Edna's door in his Stoddard Dayton touring car, its engine humming with the promise of adventure, Edna stowed her luggage and went away with him.

Newspapers loved the comical, romantic tale of the runaway lovers. Papke told a reporter, "I was never half as nervous when signing for a 20-round fight against big men as I am right now." Edna's response, if it wasn't the work of a creative journalist, was prophetic: "Well," she said, "maybe you have a fight for life now on your hands."

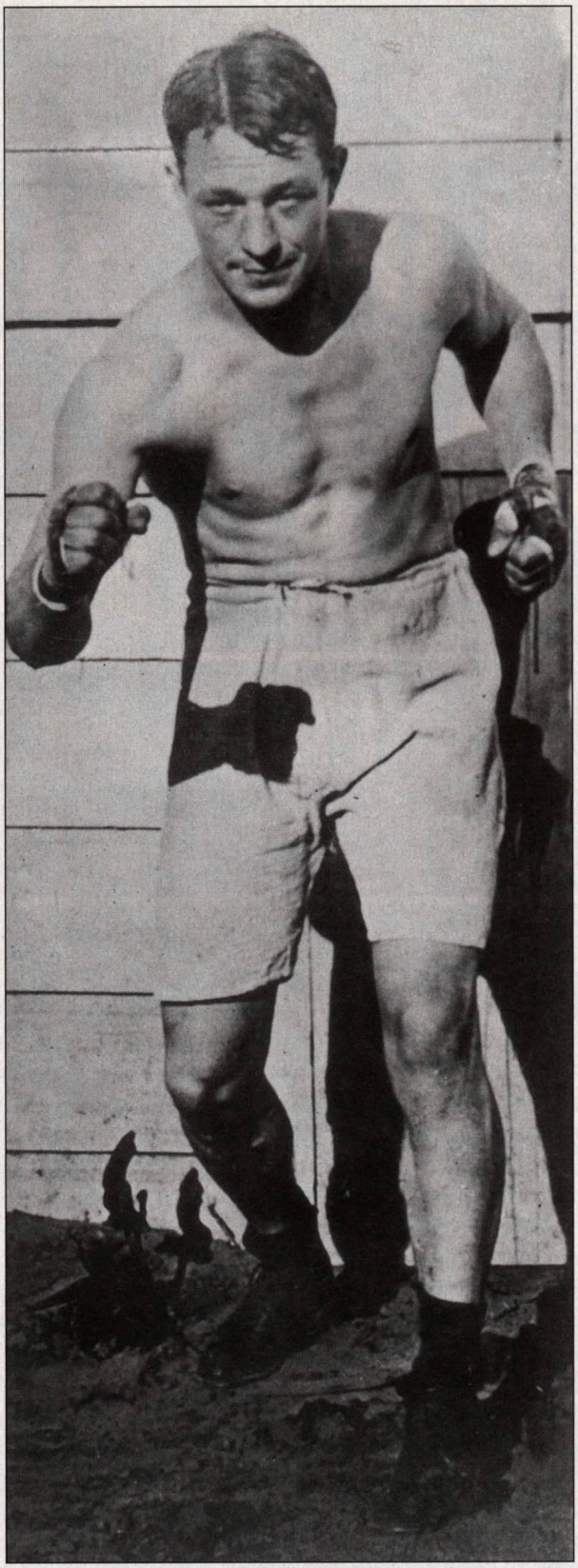
She was right, for despite being a handsome, All-American boy, Papke was an old-fashioned sort who'd been raised to believe a husband's word was law. He was also a suspicious type, known for distrusting those around him. Meanwhile, Edna was an intelligent woman with a rebellious spirit. She'd risked her family's ire to marry her sweetheart and wasn't likely to be a meek spouse. The strong personalities of Papke and Edna were destined to clash, and in the future they would make headlines of a different sort, but in 1910, as the couple barreled across the Canadian border, there were no signs of the monstrous troubles that lay ahead, or that Papke was anything less than a sun-bronzed hero.

Born on September 17, 1886, William Herman Papke's youth in Spring Valley, Illinois, was spent playing baseball, attending cockfights, and hauling coal alongside his German-American father in man-made caverns. For pocket money, Papke competed against other mineworkers in bootleg boxing matches. After testing himself as a sparring partner against some local professionals, he turned pro quietly, replacing a fellow who'd fallen ill before a bout in La Salle. Papke won and would remain undefeated during his first 27 fights.

Midwestern audiences of a century ago dubbed him "Smiling Billy" for his habit of smiling during fights. "I always put my best side out," he said. He'd cultivated a snazzy persona of a bright, young fellow who approached boxing like a kid in a blood-soaked candy store. Along with smiling at opponents, he rarely sat between rounds, preferring to stand and joke with his handlers.

Still, there was nothing charming about Papke in the ring. Columnist Charlie White described Papke as "a fighter who doesn't know how to fight, but fights anyhow, who never stops, never gives his opponent a moment's rest, who always rushes in like a bull regardless of whether he is hit or not."

Sailor Burke, who fought Papke twice, dismissed him as, "Just another fighter. He had a good right hand, but you could see it coming." Georges Carpentier, stopped by Papke in 1912, depicted Papke as "cruel, without imagination." Others were awed by Papke, including former heavyweight champion Jim Jeffries who once said, "I hold there never has been a better man at the weight than Papke." Oakland columnist Eddie Smith was ringside for many of Papke's West Coast fights, including his one-round demolition of Hugo Kelly in 1909. Smith wrote that Papke in his prime "was simply a young Hercules."



Papke will be forever linked to Stanley Ketchel because of their brutal four-fight series. Ketchel, known as "The Michigan Assassin," was, like Papke, a vicious fighter with a nasty temper.

Papke posted a career record of 37-10-6 (31), with 9 no-decision bouts, but it was a four-bout series with Stanley Ketchel that guaranteed Papke's place among the century's top middleweights and a 2001 induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. As one would expect from fighters known as "The Michigan Assassin" and "The Illinois Thunderbolt," the Ketchel-Papke bouts were violent nightmares, remembered for decades as the most savage of all boxing rivalries.

Their first bout was held in Milwaukee on June 4, 1908. Ketchel, the charismatic and popular champion, was awarded the decision after 10 rugged rounds. Their second bout, held in Los Angeles three months later, was where the rivalry truly began, for when Ketchel offered to shake hands prior to round one, Papke slugged him. Papke later defended his cheap shot by saying it was in retaliation for Ketchel's own rough tactics in Milwaukee. During the remainder of the rematch, which *The New York Times*' correspondent called "one of the bloodiest in ring history," Papke battered Ketchel, punched his eyes shut, and knocked him down repeatedly. Ketchel was finally stopped in the 12th. Papke, at 22, was the middleweight champion of the world.

Papke loved the attention and money that came with the championship. While some columnists suggested he'd developed "a swollen head," carrying a gold-tipped cane and buying three new automobiles, he also used his boxing money to put his sister through college and buy his parents a new home. Charlie White wrote, "A clean living boy, Papke should remain a champion for a long time."

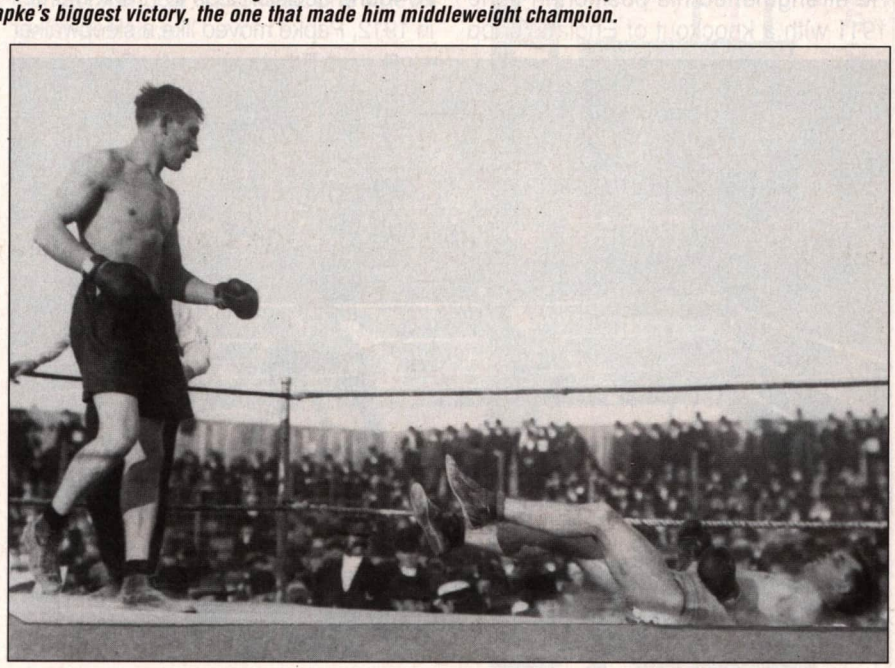
He didn't. Two months later Ketchel scored a 12th-round kayo of Papke in San Francisco. Papke's manager, Tom Jones, would tell the press that Papke had been ill prior to the rubber match but couldn't turn down the big payday. "He needed a rest; he was not a well man," said Jones. "All he had was his smile,

Referee Jim Jeffries, the former heavyweight champion, counts as Ketchel regains his feet after one of the numerous knockdowns he suffered in the second of his four fights with Papke. It was also Papke's biggest victory, the one that made him middleweight champion.

and Ketchel knocked that off after five or six rounds." Papke would later claim he'd been doped.

Ketchel also was declared the winner of their fourth bout, a 20-round contest held in Colma, California in 1909. A syndicated report described Ketchel-Papke IV as a "desperate, grueling battle," highlighted by "the extreme viciousness with which both men fought and the apparent hatred that lurked behind every punch." Forgotten over the years is that Ketchel's win was disputed. "Spectators Disagree with Decision," was the *Times*' headline. Eddie Smith noted, "Had the contest been a 45-round affair, Papke would have won."

Papke remained active. A mere nine days after going 20 with Ketchel, Papke fought a 10-round no-decision with "Fireman" Jim Flynn, and continued fight-

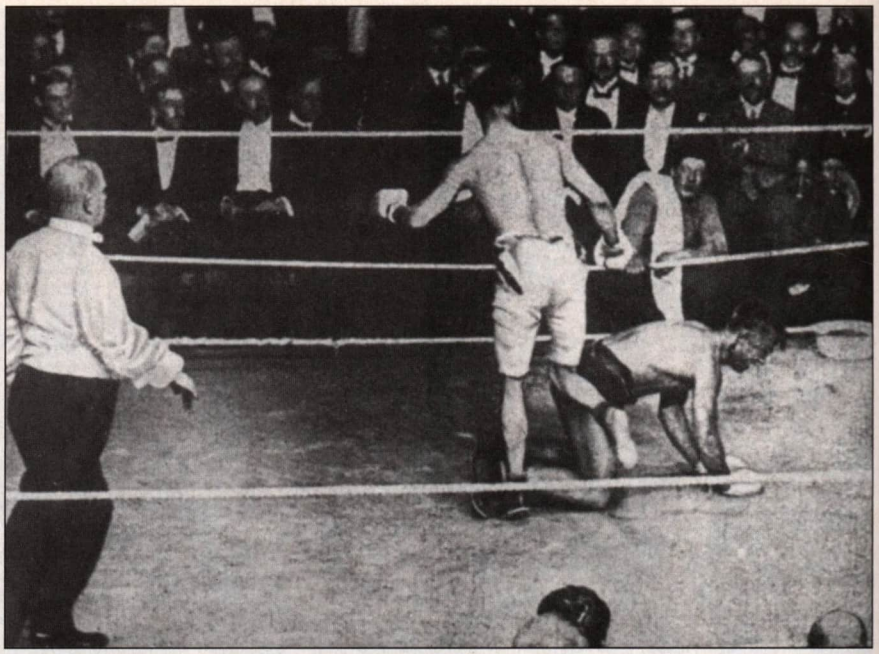


Ketchel regained the 160-pound title in his third bout with Papke, scoring an 11th-round knockout. They fought a fourth time, with Ketchel winning by an unpopular decision.

ing throughout 1910, knocking off quality opponents, including Jack "Twin" Sullivan. And then, of course, there was Edna.

Despite the press treating it as slapstick comedy, the elopement of the heiress and the pugilist wasn't without stress. After a quick marriage ceremony in Buffalo, the newlyweds learned Edna's father had contacted authorities to have the couple arrested. Edna disguised her Canadian accent as they traveled across America, for she feared being recognized by someone who might call the police. Papke even lost control of his car and smashed into a fence near Logansport, Indiana. But two months later, when the newlyweds boarded the Zealandia, a steamship bound for Australia where Papke had four fights scheduled, reporter Tom S. Andrews observed the pair and described an idyllic scene: "The Canadian girl was a favorite onboard and made hosts of friends, while her good looking husband smiled his approval." Papke would eventually disapprove of Edna's outgoing personality, but for now Papke was "putting his best side out."

He also had other things on his mind, for the terrible shooting death of Ketchel in October 1910 left the middleweight championship vacant. As the former champion and number-one contender, Papke boldly announced himself as Ketchel's logical replacement. He strengthened his position in June 1911 with a knockout of England's top middleweight, Jim Sullivan, but Papke's claim on the title wasn't met with universal approval. He'd fought poorly in Australia and baffled audiences with a string of mediocre performances. At times, he was so lethargic in the ring that he aroused suspicions of fixed bouts. "What's wrong with Papke?" became a common theme for boxing writers.



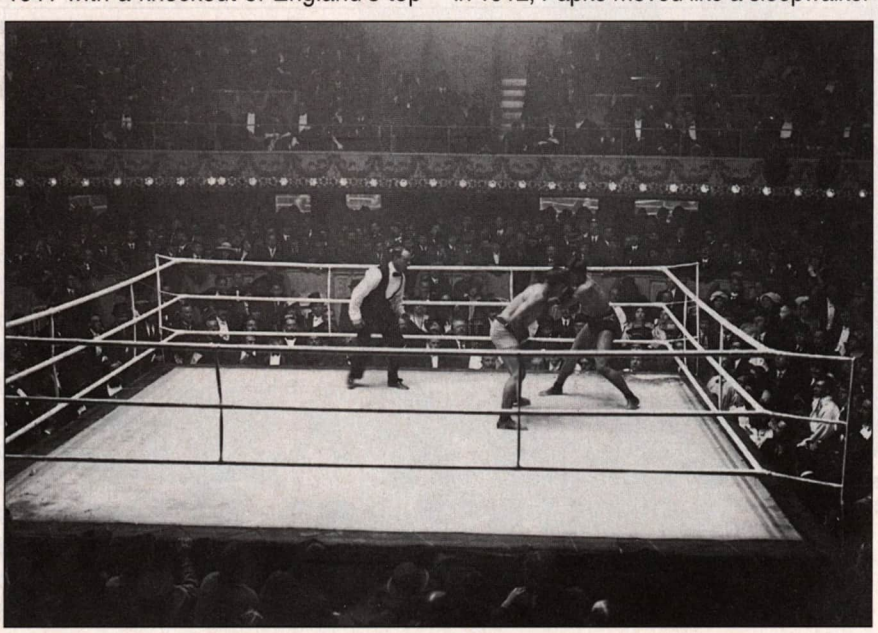
Following Ketchel's murder in 1910, Papke claimed the middleweight title and boosted his claim by beating Jim Sullivan in London, England, in 1911.

"There are times when I simply can't get started, try as I may," Papke told columnist W.W. Naughton. During a 20-round decision loss to Frank Mantell in 1912, Papke moved like a sleepwalker against an opponent he'd once kayoed in a single round. Papke told Jones in an emotional postfight breakdown, "There is something wrong with me, and I'm through with boxing."

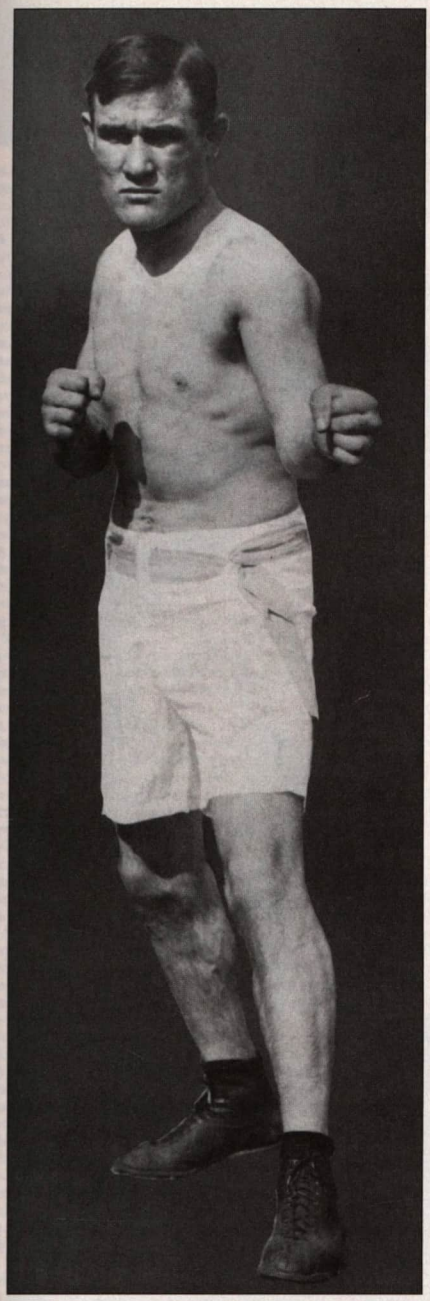
The problem stemmed from Papke's paranoid belief that Jones and his handlers were trying to drug him. That he imagined a conspiracy was brewing should have been a red flag that his mind wasn't right, but Naughton suggested Smiling Billy had merely an odd sense of humor.

After splitting from Jones, Papke rekindled his career in France with wins over Marcel Moreau, Carpentier, and Georges Bernard. The return to form ended in March 1913, when Papke faced Frank Klaus at the Cirque du Paris for the vacant middleweight title. Out of shape and desperate, Papke fouled constantly, until a brazen headbutt caused his disqualification. A number of retirements and comebacks followed, but a pathetic showing against Soldier Barfield in 1919 convinced Papke to retire for good.

In retirement Papke busied himself with thrill-seeking pursuits, such as racing automobiles and going on hunting trips (he was nearly killed by a mountain lion in Santa Anna Canyon). He and Edna had four children, including Billy Jr., who briefly tried a career in boxing. One of the rare newspaper profiles of Papke during these years described him as a contented



After parting with his former manager, Papke started anew in France, where he tallied several good wins, including a seventh-round knockout of Georges Bernard in Paris in December 1912.



Papke's claim to the middleweight title ended in 1913 when he was beaten by Frank Klaus (pictured) who was considered the genuine champion following his victory.

businessman with stakes in a rabbit farm, an onion farm, and a 10-acre citrus farm in San Dimas. The report added, "From what we can tell, he's quite devoted to his wife." But underneath Papke's jolly surface, a demon was kicking away at the inside of his head.

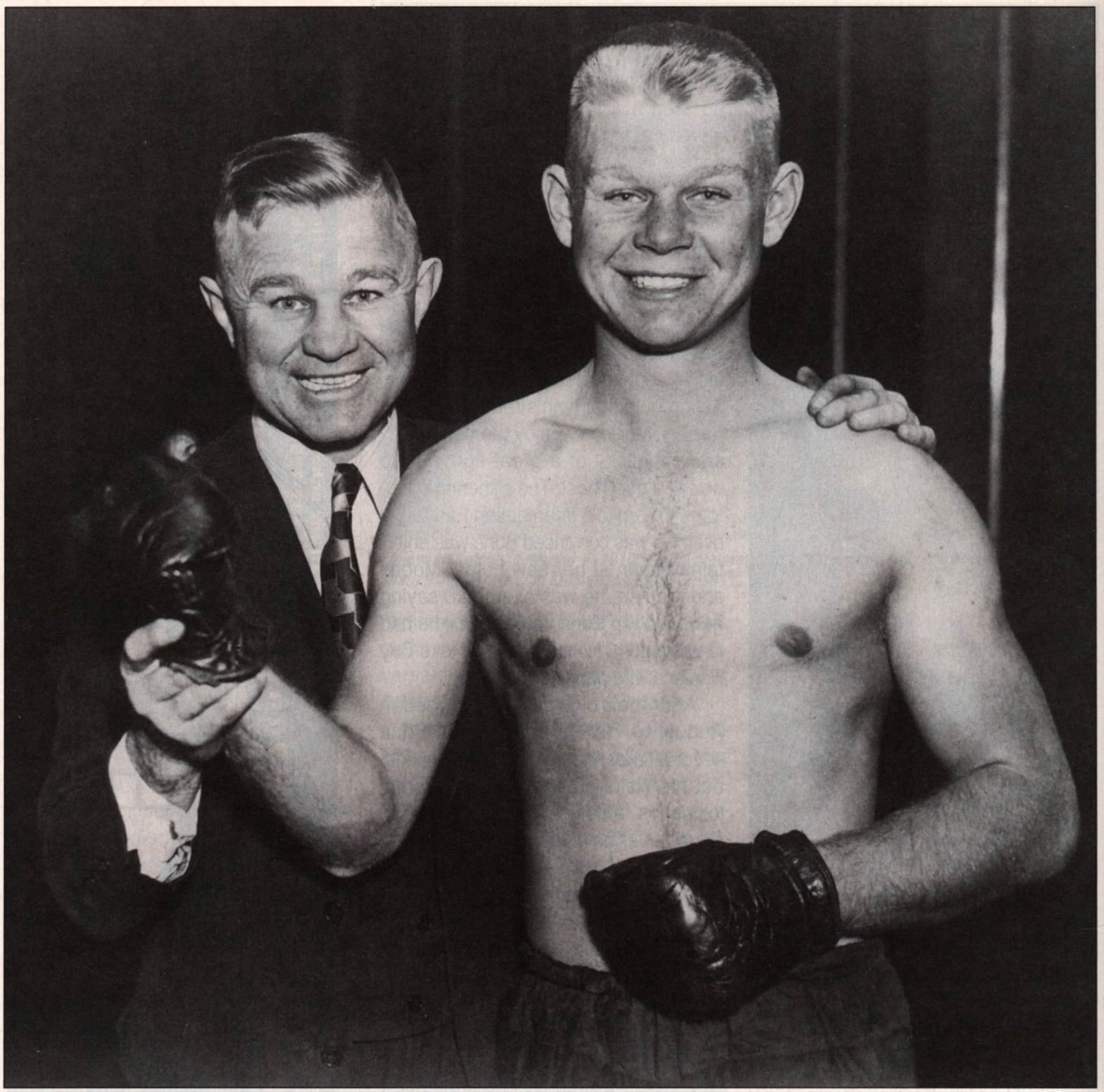
It had built up gradually, first with Papke raising his voice at dinner parties, accusing Edna of flirting with men behind his back. In February 1935, his jealousy having reached a pathological level, Papke punched Edna and ordered her out of their house. Edna filed for divorce, citing Papke's "physical cruelty and unnecessary jealousy." She relocated to Balboa Island, a newly built-up area off Newport Beach that had already established itself as a swanky, somewhat exclusive community south of L.A. Papke was left behind to read news headlines about the ex-champ hanging his "Sunday punch" on his wife's jaw.

Disgusted with the situation, Papke took a hosting job at Jim Flynn's L.A. saloon. He hadn't needed the money; he was lonely and wanted to be among the old L.A. fight mob that once revered him. A sign outside Flynn's read "Meet Billy Papke, your host. Enjoy the personality and simplicity of a great fighter." He wasn't a good host. The slithering phantoms in Papke's imagination had taken over. He was convinced Edna was entertaining men at her new home. Moody and morose, he was overheard saying he would win Edna back, even if he had to use a gun. "No man will ever take Billy Papke's wife dancing," he said.

After their divorce was finalized in August of 1936, Papke visited Edna several times, hoping for reconciliation, but his visits always ended with him losing his temper and making threats. Edna never believed Papke was a real danger to her, but his crazy behavior had her jumpy, living in fear. She promised her friends and neighbors that she would contact the local authorities. She'd never get the chance.

When Papke arrived at Edna's Ruby Street apartment on Thanksgiving night, 1936, she was chatting with a neighbor, Mrs. Helen Cabanne. The ladies saw Papke standing in the doorway. He was holding a .38 revolver he'd purchased a week earlier. Papke shot Edna twice in the heart. Then, as Mrs. Cabanne fled to call the police, Papke turned the gun on himself. His final moments on Earth were spent in psychotic fury, firing three bullets into his own chest. He died next to Edna in the vestibule. When the police arrived, he was still gripping the pistol. Papke hadn't even thought to rewrite his will—he'd left most of his estate to the woman he'd murdered.

"I can't understand why he did it," said Billy Jr. "I saw my father only this morning, and he was in good spirits. We laughed and joked like always."



"Smiling Billy" poses with his son, Billy Jr., in 1930, who turned pro that year. The younger Papke fought as a light heavyweight and tallied a 24-11-1 (15) record during a brief career that was over by the time he buried his parents.

There was plenty of speculation. Some offered that without boxing, Papke had no place to put his anger. H. B. Murray, a fight manager and one of Papke's friends, told the *Los Angeles Times*, "The same stubborn will which took him to heights in the prize ring made it impossible for him to accept defeat in his domestic affairs. Billy Papke was a one-woman man."

Modern experts on concussions might reduce the story by saying too many blows to the head had turned Papke into a depressed hulk. Others might say that jealousy is an emotion older than fire, and not even a modern woman like Edna could survive against it.

Deep down, Papke may have never felt that he deserved Edna. She was, after all, a girl of culture and manners; he was a ruffian, a dirty fighter, never too far removed from the mines. The storybook romance was probably as intoxicating for Papke as it was for Edna. He'd rescued a fair damsel, something he couldn't have imagined as a coal hauler in Spring Valley. The idea of complete obliteration may have come to Papke as he stood in the rubble of his broken fairy tale, and realized that not only Edna was gone, but so was Smiling Billy, usurped by the dark, ugly thing that had always existed behind the grin.

Billy Jr. arranged a double funeral service at the Mt. View cemetery in Altadena. The bodies were then brought to a crematorium where they were turned to piles of white ash. The story of Edna and Billy ended with an attendant waving a magnet over their remains, trying to pick up metal fragments. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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[Summary]

Heavyweights
Denis Boytsov KO 2 Kevin Montiy
Manuel Charr KO 10 Owen Beck
Andrey Fedosov KO 2 Lionel Butler

Cruiserweights
Rob Norton D 12 David Dolan
Hizni Altunkaya W 10 Silvio Meinel
Nuri Seferi KO 5 Tamas Polster
Thabiso Mchunu KO 4 Ruben Groenewald
Jesus Ruiz KO 2 Rafael Ayon
Mateusz Masternak KO 2 Tino Froehlich
Carlos Rodriguez KO 1 Jose Velazco

Light Heavyweights
Mahamed Aripgadzhiev KO 10 Mohamed Belkacem

Super Middleweights
Robert Stieglitz KO 5 Ruben Acosta
Khoren Gevor W 10 Jeferson Luis Goncalo
Matias Franco KO 6 Valentin Ochoa
Medhi Bouadla KO 5 Francisco Mora
Flash Issaka KO 5 Alani Suleman

Middleweights
Anthony Mundine W 12 Robert Medley
Roman Karmazin KO 10 Dionisio Miranda
Yves Studer W 12 Andrey Salakhutdzinau
Lukas Konecny W 10 Attila Kiss
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 9 Rigoberto Alvarez
Osumanu Adama KO 6 Mohammed Akrong
Victor Marquez KO 2 Octavio Lopez
Jose Flores KO 2 Roberto Valenzuela
John Duddy KO 1 Juan Astorga
Angel Ojeda KO 1 Pablo Pacheco

Junior Middleweights
Vanes Martirosyan W 10 Kassim Ouma
Nobuhiro Ishida W 12 Oney Valdez
Demetrius Andrade KO 1 Bernardo Guereca
Pawel Wolak W 8 Ishmail Arvin

Welterweights
Patrick Allotey W 12 Kofi Manu
Mark Thompson W 10 Kevin McIntyre
Opeti Tagi KO 8 Wahid Khan
Diego Chaves KO 4 Daniel Saboia
Dennis Laurente KO 2 Laimangkorn Chuwatana
Jorge Paez Jr. KO 1 Augusto Gamez

Junior Welterweights
Henry Lundy W 10 Richard Abril
Martin Gethin W 10 Graeme Higginson
Junior Ali KO 6 Waisale Ratu
Jimrex Jaca KO 5 Ramadhan Weriu
Jose Benavidez Jr. KO 1 Steven Cox

Lightweights
Hoang Sang Nguyen W 12 Rudy Encarnacion
Ben Murphy W 10 Lee Cook
Jason Pagara W 10 Eddy Comaro
Ryuji Migaki KO 10 Kengo Nagashima
Takehiro Shimada W 10 Alexis Salinas
Mario Gonzalez KO 8 Claudio Villegas
Tomas Sierra KO 7 Aristeo Perez
Carlos Urias KO 1 Alejandro Barrera

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINTOP RANK

Junior middleweight Vanes Martirosyan connects with a left on Kassim Ouma

Junior Lightweights
Takashi Uchiyama KO 12 Juan Carlos Salgado *(Wins WBA Title)*
Maxwell Awuku W 12 Joseph Laryea
Gamaliel Diaz W 12 Jorge Perez
Nery Saguilan W 10 Jose Osorio
James Bacon KO 4 Thitichon Singwancha
Julio Cardona KO 3 Martin Lopez
Abraham Rodriguez KO 3 Hugo Pacheco
Rey Labao KO 2 Michael Sigarlaki
Cesar Vazquez KO 2 Gabriel Pena
George Ashie KO 2 Toffik Bissuga
Diego Magdaleno W 8 Gerardo Robles

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Junior lightweight Diego Magdaleno measures Gerardo Robles

Featherweights

Juan Manuel Lopez KO 7 Steven Luevano
Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 2 Rogers Mtagwa
Juan Carlos Burgos KO 12 Juan Carlos Martinez
Miguel Caceres W 10 Claudio Tapia
Armando Cardona KO 5 David Ramos

Junior Featherweights

Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym W 12 Satoshi Hosono
Leon Moor W 12 Marangin Marbun
Mario Macias W 10 Eduardo Zaragoza
Chang-Hyun Son W 10 Jong-Won Won
Ariel Delgado KO 2 Zaragoza Uema

Bantamweights

Sasha Bakhtin KO 9 Nosir Ruzimatov
Jamie McDonnell W 12 Ian Napa
Julio Roque Ler KO 9 Sebastian Ferreyra
AJ Banal KO 4 Cecilio Santos
Tomoki Kameda KO 3 Rodolfo Garay
Bongani Mahlangu KO 1 Asamoah Wilson
Victor Orozco KO 1 Diego Hernandez

Junior Bantamweights

Tumelo Motseki W 10 Unathi Gqokoma
Marjun Yap KO 5 Julius Agcopra
Everardo Morales KO 2 Ramon Pena

Flyweights

Tepparith Singwancha W 11 Nino Suelo
Luis Lazarte W 10 Raul Medina
Rocky Fuentes KO 3 Pit Anacaya
Ashley Sexton KO 1 Usman Ahmed

Junior Flyweights

Carlos Tamara KO 12 Brian Viloria
(Wins IBF Title)
Donnie Nietes KO 10 Jesus Silvestre
Milan Melindo W 10 Anthony Villarreal
Paipharob Por Nobnom KO 5 Donnie Mabao

Strawweights

Manuel Jimenez KO 7 Armando Vazquez
Gideon Buthelezi KO 4 Nelson Mtshali

Kelly Pavlik KO 5 Miguel Espino

Youngstown, Ohio: A record-busting snowstorm that shut down much of the Northeast might have kept a few of Pavlik's fans at home, but it also added a little extra color to a stellar local event. The Beeghly Center at Youngstown State University did not quite sell out, but a large crowd of 3,409 defied the stormy weather to pay homage to homegrown hero Pavlik. The scheduled 12-rounder was for Pavlik's RING, WBC, and WBO middleweight titles.

The Contender reality-show alum Espino, 159, Los Angeles, California, was introduced to a storm of boos, but would win the admiration of many before the evening's end. As you might have expected, Pavlik, 160, enjoyed the crowd's admiration throughout. And they were justifiably hungry for a Pavlik fight, as he'd been out 10 months with assorted illnesses and injuries.

The tone of the contest was set immediately, and with it, the eventual outcome. There was no feel-out round. To the crowd's delight, both fighters ripped into each other at first bell, full tilt. Espino tried to go to Pavlik's body, but was met with thunderous payback. The much shorter challenger obviously wanted to move the fight to the inside, but even there Pavlik had the clear advantage. Despite his long arms, he was able to punch effectively at close range, and Espino was getting the worst of it. The riled-up challenger sneaked a left hook in just after the bell, and he lost a point for it.

Espino started the second round with a renewed body attack, but again Pavlik was happy to make it a street fight and answered back. Referee Steve Smoger had to intervene and warn them both for low blows. Pavlik took control and found the weapon that would lead him to victory, a jarring

PHOTO BY GARY SARTI/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Pavlik rips into Espino's ribs

right uppercut. But Espino was still in the fight, and "The Ghost's" right eye began to puff. The third was the closest round, and the last hurrah for the challenger. Espino started strongly, got warned for a low blow, fell behind, and then rallied in an exchange at the bell.

In the fourth, Pavlik finally got behind the punch he needed to quell the courageous but outgunned Espino. The right uppercut twice folded the challenger to his knees, and Espino was wobbly at the bell. He nevertheless came outgunning in the fifth but was nailed by a left hook during a wide-open exchange. Espino dropped to a knee again. He arose and gamely resumed action, but fearing his fighter was taking too much punishment, trainer John Bray signaled for a stoppage. The action was still so heated that Smoger had trouble getting in without being clocked himself, finally halting the bout at the 1:44 mark.

Pavlik, 36-1 (32), led 40-33 on the cards of William Lerch (USA), Jack Woodburn (Canada), and Steve Weisfeld (USA). The far-from-dispirited Espino, 20-3-1 (9), blamed his defeat on his willingness to mix, saying he abandoned his game plan to circle right.

Talk quickly turned to more threatening opponents for Pavlik's next fight, including the likes of Paul Williams, Sergio Martinez, and Felix Sturm.

Television: **Top Rank Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(12-19-09)
J. R. Jowett

Robert Stieglitz KO 5
Ruben Eduardo Acosta

Magdeburg, Germany: It might have been a more interesting night, had it gone ahead as originally scheduled. Edison Miranda would have had the artillery to fire back at least, but the powerful Colombian's withdrawal because of a nasal infection and flu left Stieglitz, 167¾, Magdeburg, Germany, via Yeysk, Russia, with the far more comfortable task of facing last-minute replacement Acosta, 167½,

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Takashi Uchiyama

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Back in the days of one title per division, rare was the title challenger who hadn't proven himself before stepping into the ring with the champion. But in modern boxing, with so many divisions and so many titlists floating around, it's commonplace to see a fighter's first test come with a belt at stake. Such was the case with Japanese junior lightweight Takashi Uchiyama, and on the same night he proved himself to be a world-class fighter, he also left the ring with a title belt.

Uchiyama came into his challenge of WBA titlist Juan Carlos Salgado with only 13 bouts on his professional resume, and the only opponent among those 13 whose name meant anything was a faded Nedal Hussein. So to anyone outside the Uchiyama camp, Salgado, who'd iced the talented Jorge Linares in one round last October, looked like a solid favorite to retain his belt. Inexperience, however, doesn't necessarily translate to incompetence, and Uchiyama dominated the fight en route to a 12th-round stoppage.

There was some thought given to naming Roman Karmazin the Fighter of the Month, since the Russian showed extraordinary heart in dramatically stopping Dionisio Miranda. Karmazin, however, was expected in most quarters to beat Miranda handily. So in a sense, he underachieved. The same can't be said of Uchiyama, who took a sizable step up, and then took a giant leap in terms of proving himself.

PHOTO BY JENS SCLUETER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Stieglitz drills Acosta with a left hook

Buenos Aires, Argentina, whom he duly dispatched in the fifth round at Bordelandhalle. It was the first defense by Stieglitz of the WBO super middleweight title that he won in August '09 against Karoly Balzsay.

Nothing in Acosta's record suggested the resilience that would be required. He was knocked out in four rounds by former WBA super middleweight titleholder Anthony Mundine in November 2006 and, although he had since accumulated a seven-bout unbeaten record, the only notable name he faced in that time was fellow Argentine Julio Cesar Vasquez, whom he stopped in the opening round. Vasquez was formidable enough to have held the WBA light middleweight title at one point in his life, but he was 42 by the time he encountered Acosta.

Stieglitz was born in Russia, but he has settled cozily in Magdeburg, and his promoters at Universum were happy to describe it as the most successful event they had staged in the city.

Early on, Acosta, 31, must have realized it was the wrong stage for him. The 28-year-old Stieglitz was simply a class above his overmatched challenger, who lacked the guile and firepower to counteract the naturalized German's boxing skills and strength of punch. Having bossed it over the first couple of rounds, Stieglitz floored Acosta with a left hook in the third and the end was in sight for the Argentine, even though he survived to the bell. Stieglitz, 37-2 (23), applied further pressure in the fourth and fifth, and a fierce bodyshot felled Acosta, 23-4-5 (7), for a second time before Puerto Rican referee Jose Hiram Rivera waved it over at the 1:48 mark.

Promoter: **Universum Box-Promotion**

(1-9-10)

Brian Doogan

Hozumi Hasegawa KO 4 Alvaro Perez

Kobe, Japan: Running his knockout streak to five straight—in a total of 10 rounds—WBC bantam titlist Hasegawa, 117¾, impressively scored his 10th defense when a vicious double left cross dropped Nicaraguan challenger Perez, 117, face first and prompted an immediate stoppage at 2:38 of the fourth round. A couple days after his 29th birthday, Hasegawa celebrated it in style in front of his hometown fans.

It was a short but hard-fought battle of southpaws. Hasegawa predicted his third consecutive first-round knockout win, so Perez, 27, came out fighting furiously from the outset in hopes of turning the tables on Hasegawa. The Nicaraguan threw strong left crosses at the titlist, who coolly slipped them and attempted to counter.

The second round saw Perez land a solid left to Hasegawa, who then began to respect the desperate challenger and raised his guard. Hasegawa connected with some precise left crosses, but Perez' combination in the closing seconds had the beltholder off-balance, to the point where he almost looked to have touched the canvas with a glove. Referee Bruce McTavish (Philippines) ruled no knockdown, however.

In the third, Hasegawa began to score with good southpaw jabs and quick lefts. Perez was still aggressive, but couldn't land much since Hasegawa had figured out the challenger's timing and angles.

In round four, Hasegawa, 28-2 (12), grew more accurate in catching the game challenger. He was in clear command with sharp jabs and solid left crosses. Finally, the titleholder landed a solid, short double left that was reminiscent of Muhammad Ali's double punch to Zora Folley in 1967. Perez, 18-2-1 (12) with 3 no-contests, fell on his face and McTavish correctly waved off the fight without a count.

Hasegawa is now expected to possibly renounce his 118-pound belt to move up to the 122-pound or 126-pound division.

Promoters: **Shinsei Promotions, Teiken Promotions**

(12-18-09)

Joe Koizumi

Edwin Valero KO 7 Hector Velazquez

La Guaira, Venezuela: After a six-year period where he was unable to obtain a license to fight in the United States due to a problematic brain scan, heavily hyped kayo artist Valero finally got licensed in Texas and made his American return last April. Unfortunately, his return to the States lasted all of one fight, as a drunken driving charge made "El Inca" unable to obtain a visa. So instead he made his first defense of the WBC lightweight belt in his native Venezuela, and as expected, journeyman challenger Velazquez capitulated inside the distance, just like the first 25 opponents of Valero's career.

Velazquez had no business challenging for a lightweight title, but that's never stopped the alphabet boys before. The 34-year-old Tijuana, Mexico, native had dropped two of his previous three bouts—one at featherweight and one at junior lightweight—and his primary claim to fame was a sixth-round kayo defeat to Manny Pacquiao in 2005. Velazquez, 134¼, did his best to make it a rough and tumble affair and make Valero, 134½, Merida, Venezuela, uncomfortable, and he enjoyed a measure of success when a clash of heads cut the 28-year-old titlist over his eyebrow early in the bout.

But in terms of doing damage with his fists, Velazquez accomplished little. Valero, 26-0 (26), was the bigger and much stronger man, and his two-fisted southpaw attack did more and more damage with each passing round. After six rounds of punishment, Velazquez, 51-14-2 (35) with 1 no-contest, declined to come out of his corner for round seven, and referee Hector Afu (Panama) officially declared a halt 10 seconds after the bell rang for the seventh round.

Though Valero is unable to fight in the U.S. at the moment, he will make his non-pay-per-view American television debut in his next bout, a Showtime-televised contest from Monterrey, Mexico, against Antonio DeMarco.

Promoter: **Jose Machek**

(12-19-09)

Takashi Uchiyama KO 12 Juan Carlos Salgado

Tokyo, Japan: Salgado's alphabet title reign ended just as suddenly as it began. Unbeaten puncher Uchiyama, 130, impressively captured the WBA super feather belt when he caught the previously unbeaten Mexican and forced a stoppage at 2:48 of the 12th round, just three months after Salgado burst onto the world scene with an upset first-round knockout of Jorge Linares.

PHOTO BY JUAN BARRETO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Valero drinks in the cheers following kayo of Velazquez

Although the judges saw it as a competitive fight, it looked lopsided in the challenger's favor to most at ringside at the Tokyo Big Sight Arena. The 25-year-old Salgado, 130, was ineffective throughout with his roundhouse punches. Uchiyama, 30, constantly took the initiative and battered the defending titleholder from the first round to the last.

Making good use of jabs and left hooks, Uchiyama cleverly set Salgado up for his strong straight rights. But he never got reckless, well aware that the Mexican had essentially knocked out Linares with one shot.

Uchiyama steadily piled on punishment and really turned loose in round 10, when he decisively battered the fading Salgado with solid left hooks and heavy rights. Uchiyama accelerated his determined attack

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Salgado reels after fielding a left from Uchiyama

in the 11th as he landed a vicious right that had Salgado staggering to the ropes.

Uchiyama scored with an explosive combination that dropped the beltholder midway through the last session. Referee Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) generously allowed him to go on, but the Japanese challenger's follow-up assault was furious. Uchiyama, 14-0 (11), jumped in like a tiger and landed a right that left Salgado, 22-1-1 (16), sagging along the ropes. Caiz had no choice but to call a halt with 12 seconds left on the clock. Before the stoppage, all three judges favored the aggressive challenger, but by surprisingly close scores. Tom Miller (USA) and Rafael Ramos (USA) both had it 107-102, while Chalerm Prayadsab (Thailand) saw it 106-103.

Uchiyama, a former amateur champ who turned professional somewhat late at 25, jubilantly thanked his mother and father in the ring afterward and had little else to say. Clearly, it was an emotional victory for him.

Meanwhile, it wasn't Salgado's night, but he showed heart. Despite his defeat, Salgado's upset victory over Linares in the same city three months earlier won't vanish and will remain a major event in recent Japanese boxing.

Promoters: **Ohashi Promotions, Watanabe Promotions**

(1-11-10)

Joe Koizumi

Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym W 12 Satoshi Hosono

Tokyo, Japan: WBA super bantam titlist Poonsawat, 122, Thailand, used a persistent attack at close range, made use of his abundant stamina, and pounded out a well-received majority decision over previously unbeaten "Bazooka" Hosono, 122, Japan, over 12 see-saw rounds at the Tokyo Big Sight Arena. Judge Tom Miller (USA) had it 115-113 for Poonsawat, Michael Lee (Korea) saw it 117-113 for the Thai, and Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) seemed a bit off the mark in scoring it 114-114. The referee was Rafael Ramos (USA).

The entertaining bout paired two tiny bulls who swapped punches from the outset to the end. But it was the more aggressive and energetic beltholder who edged the majority of the rounds as he made his first defense of the title he won via third-round knockout over Bernard Dunne last September. Poonsawat, three years older than his opponent at 29, showed his experience and ring craft in connecting with short left hooks and right uppercuts to the face with better precision than Hosono.

Poonsawat's style was reminiscent of junior welterweight Timothy Bradley—quick, sharp, busy, and clever, if not so hard-hitting. Hosono, a full-fledged featherweight who moved down to the 122-pound division, had been expected to utilize his physical power against the shorter 5'4" titlist, but Poonsawat so effectively mixed it up that Hosono was often overpowered at close quarters.

Hosono got off to a decent start by connecting with solid uppercuts in the opening session. But Poonsawat used incessant combinations to frequently force Hosono onto the defensive. Varying between narrow margins and wide ones, Poonsawat arguably won every round from the second through eighth. He also revealed his iron chin, as he withstood Hosono's vaunted left hook and retaliated with busier combos in round four.

Hosono had his best round in the ninth, when he jabbed, moved, and scored with good left-right combinations to win a point. But after showing such good skills that round, Hosono returned to his usual bullfight style immediately afterward, battling toe-to-toe and playing into Poonsawat's strengths.

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Poonsawat celebrates hard-fought majority decision over Hosono

It was disclosed after the bout that Hosono experienced pain in his right hand from the eighth round on, so that might explain his inconsistent attack in the later rounds. Poonsawat, despite his disadvantages in height and reach, kept throwing better and busier jabs that left Hosono bleeding slightly from the nostrils.

In the final session, Hosono, 16-1 (12), desperately attacked and almost certainly earned the round, but it wasn't enough to overcome his deficit on points.

WBC bantam titlist Hozumi Hasegawa was on hand as a TV commentator, and Poonsawat, 40-1 (28), said to him from the ring afterward, "If you move up to my class, I'm willing to fight you." That would be a very interesting fight if it materializes.

Promoters: **Ohashi Promotions, Watanabe Promotions**

(1-11-10)

Joe Koizumi

Nehomar Cermeno KO II Alejandro Valdez

Ciudad Obregon, Mexico: In the main event of the Itson Arena portion of a split-site pay-per-view, Cermeno, an intriguing mystery man to American fans fresh off two upset wins over Cristian Mijares in Mexico, got a modest opportunity for U.S. television exposure and made neither the most nor the least of it. Defending his trivial "interim" WBA bantamweight belt against hometown favorite Valdez, the unbeaten Cermeno was impressive at times, drew boos for excessive movement at other times, and ultimately earned the stoppage, advancing one spot in THE RING rankings to number six.

The crowd was highly partisan in favor of Valdez, 118, Ciudad Obregon, Mexico, and nearly suffered a major disappointment when the local fighter was cut by a clash of heads two minutes into the bout. The gash was in a bad spot, on Valdez' right eyelid, and a more panicky ring doctor might have recommended stopping the fight, but instead the fight was allowed to continue and the Mexican's corner was given a chance to work on the wound. They did an outstanding job and the cut never again became a concern.

However, the punches of Cermeno, 118, Panama City, Panama, via Caracas, Venezuelas, soon did become a concern. The fast-handed Venezuelan scored a pair of knockdowns in the second round, though both were somewhat controversial. The first occurred when Cermeno landed a left hand, the fighters' feet were tangled, and Valdez went down. The second came following a right hand, and though the knockdown was clean, the punch Cermeno landed while his opponent was on one knee was not. Referee Russell Mora (USA) issued no warning, however, and the round ended with Cermeno out to a healthy lead on the scorecards.

From then on, the entertainment value of the fight ebbed and flowed, with some rounds bogged down with cautious boxing and others highlighted by aggressive exchanges. In the fifth, Cermeno, 30, was counterpunching and sharpshooting effectively against his southpaw opponent, but Valdez, 26, stole the round with a right uppercut-left cross combination just before the bell that seemed to buzz Cermeno.

Repeatedly, due to the righty-lefty matchup, the fighters' heads came together, and it was always Valdez who seemed most adversely affected by it. The fight took a comical turn in the seventh round, when timeout was called to fix dangling tape on Cermeno's gloves and his cornermen had no scissors and had to resort to trying to bite the tape off. Once action resumed, Cermeno circled to his right brilliantly and time and again caught Valdez off-balance with sharp, straight right hands. Because the movement was proving effective, Cermeno kept at it the next couple of rounds, drawing boos from the Mexican fans.

A desperate, frustrated but aggressive Valdez enjoyed maybe his best round in the 10th, but his rally was short-lived. In round 11, the heads came together again and while Valdez, 22-4-2 (16), complained, Cermeno pounced. In the final minute of the round, a big right hand by Cermeno, 19-0 (11), hurt Valdez, then a searing right uppercut put him on the floor. Valdez rose at the count of eight, but Mora took a close look and called off the bout at the 2:40 mark.

Television: **Top Rank Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Promociones Zanfer**
(12-19-09)

Humberto Soto W 10 Jesus Chavez

Ciudad Obregon, Mexico: A matchup of two fighters headed in different directions, young veteran Soto and old veteran Chavez, ended with both men continuing on their respective trajectories. By winning a shutout 10-round decision, top junior lightweight Soto, 29, won his fourth fight of 2009 and extended his winning streak to six, while former beltholder Chavez, 37, lost his third in a row. "El Matador" gave an honest effort, but it wasn't enough, and from the moment he was knocked down just 30 seconds into the fight, he never had a prayer of winning.

A long jab followed by a right to the back of the head put Chavez, 136½, Chihuahua, Mexico, on the canvas shortly after the opening bell, but he got up unhurt early in the count of Mexican referee Francisco Gaviria. Chavez battled back in earnest, throwing numerous punches, but Soto was picking him off and doing all the landing, including a nifty left uppercut with his back to the ropes.

Chavez had his moments in the second and third rounds, his pressure arguably earning him some points despite the far more accurate punching of Soto. But in the fourth, "La Zorrita" settled into a groove, getting by far the better of the entertaining action, particularly with his uppercuts and a ripping left to the ribs. Another left to the body in round five convinced Chavez to move backward for the first time, and Soto proceeded to rain one right hand after another on Chavez' face. Clearly frustrated, Chavez responded by blatantly spinning Soto and throwing him headfirst through the ropes, earning a one-point penalty from Gaviria.

The dirty tactics continued in the sixth, when Soto, 137, Los Mochis, Mexico, collapsed in a heap following a flagrant left hand to the cup from Chavez. Again, Gaviria took a point from the older man. After about a three-minute timeout, Soto felt recovered enough to continue, but hadn't recovered his cool, and he engaged Chavez in wild slugging action. The sixth and seventh were both close rounds, but any chance Chavez had of inching back into the fight was halted in the eighth when Soto froze his opponent with a left uppercut to the chin followed by three big right hands.

Soto, 50-7-2 (32) with 1 no-contest, was even more effective in the ninth, and a sweet straight right hand secured the 10th round for the prefight favorite. Chavez, 44-7 (30), never quit trying, but he was clearly low on energy in the final stanza.

Still, Chavez had given Soto a tougher time than most observers had expected, and THE RING scored the bout 97-91 for Soto. Somewhat surprisingly, all three Mexican judges failed to give Chavez a single round, as Martin Canizalez, Francisco Mouet, and Esteban Soto each scored the fight 100-87 for Soto.

This fight occurred two pounds over the lightweight limit, and Soto has hinted that he might vacate his junior lightweight alphabet belt to campaign at 135 pounds. As of press time, however, his next fight was not yet scheduled.

Television: **Top Rank Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Promociones Zanfer**
(12-19-09)

PHOTO BY RAFAEL SOTO/TOP RANK

Soto's technique was too much for brawling Chavez

Jurgen Brahmer W 12 Dmitriy Sukhotsky

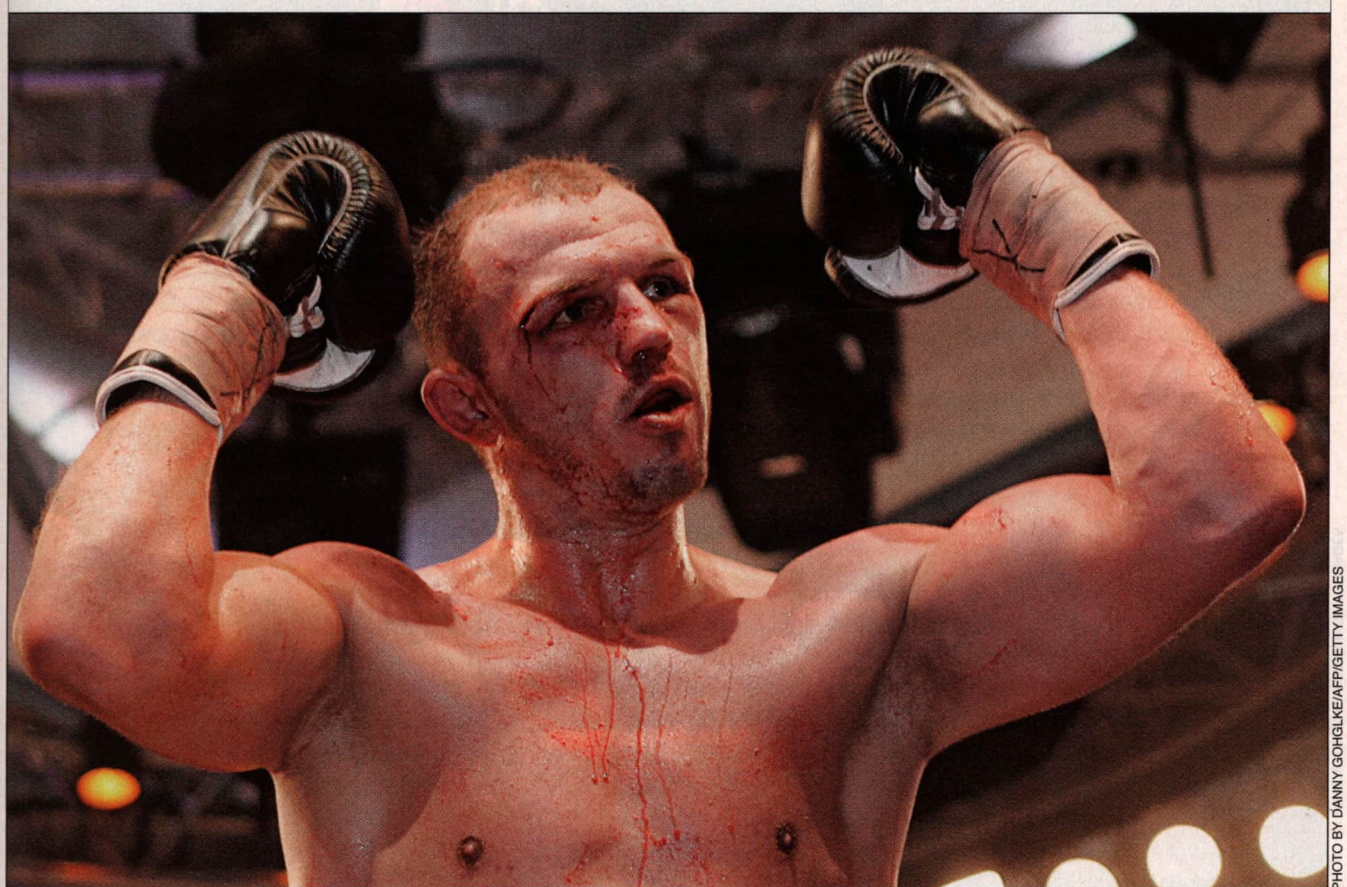
Schwerin, Germany: In a grueling and compelling encounter that could hold up as a candidate for Fight of the Year, Brahmer, 174¾, Schwerin, Germany, survived a torturous 10th round before he secured a deserved unanimous decision on points to retain the "interim" WBO light heavyweight title against Sukhotsky, 172½, Barnaul, Russia, inside his hometown's Sport and Congress Center. It was Brahmer's first defense since winning the interim belt against Poland's Aleksy Kuziemski in August last year.

Sukhotsky was unbeaten, but Brahmer's proven track record made him a strong favorite. The German southpaw's only defeats came in 2006 against former title challenger Mario Veit—in a controversial majority decision—and in 2008 when he dropped another decision to Argentina's Hugo Hernan Garay for the WBA light heavyweight title. Sukhotsky's most significant victory was an inconclusive decision on points over eight rounds against fellow Russian David Gogiya, who once held the European super middleweight title. It figured to be an interesting fight, but no one could have envisaged the fireworks that ensued.

Sukhotsky, 28, provided the "X factor," recovering from a solid left to the jaw that staggered him in the second round to give Brahmer all the trouble he could handle. The Russian gained confidence as he found the perfect range for his right hand down the middle, and the pattern of a tough, incredibly taxing battle was set. Brahmer, 31, met the trouble head on and fired salvos of shots to the head and body, but Sukhotsky's impressive defense minimized the damage.

Another attack by the remorseless Sukhotsky hurt his foe again, and by the ninth round Brahmer was cut over his right eye as the danger signals became increasingly evident. The German was still winning the fight, but whether he'd make it to the end was uncertain. His greatest test arrived in the 10th when he was clearly hurt by a fusillade of punches and, having retreated against the ropes, had to withstand a further barrage. It seemed as if he was flagging seriously when American referee Michael Ortega intervened to allow the ringside physician to inspect Brahmer's wounded eye, which was leaking blood. The respite became a lifeline for the German titleholder, who instigated a brutal exchange when both men re-engaged. Before the round was over, Sukhotsky was under pressure.

Having come through the most nervous moments of his examination, Brahmer demonstrated his quality with a formidable effort in the final two rounds, finishing the fight in the ascendancy although it had threatened to end in a suffocating crisis. Judges Manfred Kuechler (Germany) and Nelson Vazquez (Puerto Rico) both scored 116-112 for Brahmer, while Fernando Laguna (Spain) had the German winning by a more imposing 118-110. THE RING scored 117-113 for Brahmer, whose credentials as a warrior can be questioned no more.



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Blood-smeared Brahmer overcame cuts to beat Sukhotsky

However, his freedom to compete in the ring could come into the question in the months ahead. About three weeks after defeating Sukhotsky, Brahmer was sentenced to 16 months in prison for an alleged assault at a bar. Whether the boxer will actually serve jail time remains uncertain, as his legal team announced plans to appeal the decision.

Promoter: **Universum Box-Promotion**
(12-19-09)
Brian Doogan

Cristobal Cruz Tech. Draw 3 Ricardo Castillo

Chiapas, Mexico: Journeyman-turned-titleholder Cruz tallied his third successful defense of the IBF featherweight belt at Palenque de Gallos, though calling it "successful" is really just a technicality. Actually, the bout was a major disappointment for Cruz, who clashed heads with challenger Castillo in the third round, suffered a nasty cut on his left eye, and had to settle for a three-round technical draw.

Castillo, the 30-year-old brother of former world lightweight champion Jose Luis Castillo, wasn't expected to threaten Cruz much. The Mexicali man had suffered five losses in his previous 11 fights, two of them failed title tries, plus he lost an eight-round decision to Cruz back in 2003. These were fighters going in opposite directions, and the 32-year-old Cruz, 126, Tijuana, Mexico, seemed likely to win his sixth-straight bout since a 2007 defeat to Zahir Raheem. But before either Cruz or Castillo, 126, could really get any serious work done, the heads came together and the bout was over.

On account of the inconclusive result, Cruz, 39-11-2 (23), and Castillo, 38-7-1 (25), signed for an immediate rematch, due to take place February 19 at Palenque de la Feria in Chiapas.

Television: **Televisa**
Promoters: **Banner Promotions, Boxeo de Gala**
(12-19-09)

Anthony Mundine W 12 Robert Medley

Sydney, Australia: While he has now won 15-straight matches dating back to September 2005, Anthony Mundine, rated the number-six contender at middleweight by THE RING, appears increasingly bored with his opposition. After dismissing the challenge of countryman Robert Medley on points over 12 rounds, "The Man" lamented the absence of big fights.

"I have to step up now," Mundine pleaded. "These guys are fighting for everything. For me, it is hard to get up. When I get a real challenge, that is when my best will come out."

PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Mundine decisioned Medley for his 15th-straight victory

The 34-year-old Mundine, 159, Sydney, Australia, a former super middleweight titleholder, had originally announced his intention to fight Medley at junior middleweight. One week out, however, it was confirmed the match would be contested at middleweight. Mundine blamed the IBO for not adhering to his demands for all local officials, while Medley claimed that Mundine simply could not make the weight.

The 28-year-old Medley, 158, Oakdale, Australia, had only previously lost to world-class South African Isaac Hlatshwayo (two separate times). He was moving up above his best weight to fight Mundine and, in the end, it made a huge difference.

Mundine came out in round one with much more aggression than he had used in recent fights. While they were close in height, Medley did not have the same physical presence and pop on his punches. Round two was a much stronger one for Medley, who used his jab effectively and scored with eye-catching flurries.

But it was a forceful round three for Mundine and he was winning most of the exchanges in the following round as well. Medley kept punching, but The Man was more accurate. Medley was hit with a clean right hand to the body in round five and nearly fell to the floor, with only the bottom rope keeping him off the canvas. He quickly regained his balance, and referee Brian McMahon (Australia) did not rule a knockdown. With the fight well in hand after that, a comfortable Mundine began to play to the estimated live audience of 6,000 with some exaggerated body movement.

Mundine came out in round eight with renewed vigor, looking to knock out Medley, 27-3 (17). Mundine may have been stung by criticism over his recent lack of knockouts—eight fights now without a stoppage victory—and he saw a chance to possibly put Medley away. It wasn't to be, though. The heavily tattooed miner knew how to survive and even used an educated jab to win a few rounds. For his part, Mundine, 38-3 (23), fought better than expected, overcoming hip and groin injuries that will now send him to surgery.

Mundine won a unanimous decision on the scorecards of the three Australian judges, Garry Dean (117-115), Trevor Christian (117-112), and Bernie McMahon (117-113). Dean's four drawn rounds and slim two-point margin to Mundine was incomprehensible. THE RING gave Mundine the decision, 117-111.

"I don't know what the judges were doing," said Mundine. "I landed all of the good shots. It was a shutout, man."

Mundine's run of lesser opponents will now continue. The co-main event was the final of *The Contender* Australia tournament between Kariz Kariuki and Garth Wood at super middleweight. Wood won a split-decision over seven rounds, and his reward is a guaranteed fight with Mundine later in 2010.

Promoter: **Tony Mundine Sr.**
(1-11-10)
Paul Upham

Fernando Guerrero KO 4 Jessie Nicklow

Hinckley, Minnesota: Guerrero entered the ring for his *ShoBox* main event wearing a T-shirt for a local concrete construction company. Demolition seemed a more fitting industry to plug for the crowd-pleasing middleweight prospect, who calmly deconstructed Nicklow within four rounds at Grand Casino Hinckley.

The two Maryland residents had met five times as amateurs, with Guerrero, 162, Salisbury, Maryland, winning three of those bouts. Minus headgear and 12-ounce gloves, the smaller Nicklow, 160½, Severn, Maryland, had less success. He did prove tough and competitive, especially when using his hand speed on the inside. But when Nicklow opted to box from a distance, Guerrero put his superior power and five-inch reach advantage to good use.

The first round was fairly close as the 23-year-old southpaw Guerrero, 17-0 (14), moved forward patiently. The 22-year-old Nicklow, 19-2-2 (7), had success with left hooks and straight rights to the body at close range. When Nicklow switched to southpaw and tried to box on the outside with 50 seconds to go in the round, he was promptly fed a series of solid right hooks upstairs.

The Dominican Republic-born Guerrero remained patient in the second. In the final minute, Nicklow retreated into the ropes after Guerrero hurt him with a straight right to the jaw. Guerrero stayed calm, and "The Beast" appeared to have recovered by the end of the round.

Guerrero started the third with a solid left to the head, but Nicklow quickly answered with a counter right to the face that briefly stunned Guerrero, who has been dropped twice in his career. That shot sparked more aggression from Guerrero, who began battering Nicklow with combinations and bodyshots. A counter right hook midway through had Nicklow momentarily retreating again, and a hard left uppercut to the jaw in the final minute wobbled The Beast, who became an increasingly stationary target inside during the latter portion of the round.

Nicklow continued battling, trying to counter Guerrero on the inside at the start of the fourth. The strategy backfired as Guerrero dropped Nicklow to his knees with a right hook to the chin 38 seconds into the round. Nicklow was up at four, but was clearly buzzed, and Guerrero swarmed him with powershots in an attempt to end it. He repeatedly rocked Nicklow, but the underdog who quit his construction job to train full-time for the Guerrero bout continued firing back bravely on rubbery legs.

After a tiring Guerrero landed three straight right hooks to the jaw, referee Mark Nelson (USA) stopped it at the 2:09 mark of the round. It was the fifth win of 2009 for Guerrero, a 2007 U.S. Nationals champ, while Nicklow fell to 0-2-1 in his last three bouts.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **DiBella Entertainment**
(12-18-09) ■

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July 1986: Hagler & Hearns Roar To The Rematch. Plus: Mike Tyson, Donny Lalonde, Donald Curry, Richie Sandoval, Azumah Nelson.

Sept. 1986: Mike Tyson Shows He's Mortal ... But He's Still Headed For Immortality. Plus: Matthew Hilton, Marvin Hagler, Vinny Pazienza, Frank Bruno, Luis Espinoza.

Oct. 1986: Hector "Macho" Camacho Retains His Title, But Loses His Nickname. Plus: Mike Tyson, Michael Olajide Jr., Gerry Cooney.

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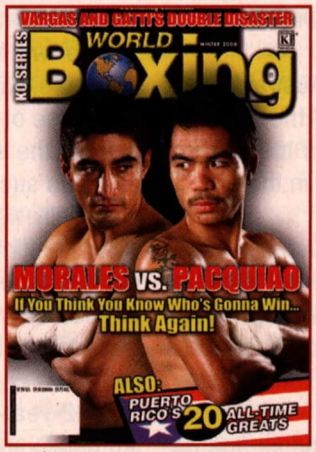

Winter 2006

Jan. 1987: The Formidable Mike Tyson: Primed For His Title Challenge. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Bobby Czyz, Curry-Honeyghan, Hagler-Leonard, Berbick-Tyson.

Feb. 1987: Mark Breland: The Class Of '84. Plus: Thomas Hearns, Lloyd Honeyghan, Camacho-Rosario, Olympians.

March 1987: Year In Review. Plus: Marvin Johnson, Tyson-Berbick, Larry Holmes.

April 1987: Tyson vs. Bonecrusher: Who Will Survive Their Unification War? Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Greg Haugen, John Mugabi, Julio Cesar Chavez.

May 1987: Hagler-Leonard: Super Fight Or Super Slaughter? Plus: Mike Tyson, Chris Reid, The Dynamite Dozen.

June 1987: Shining Stars: Pazienza, Holyfield, Curry. Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Bobby Czyz.

July 1987: After The Bonecrusher Bore: Mike Tyson's Task—Rekindle The Excitement. Plus: Thomas Hearns, George Foreman, Tyrell Biggs, Spinks-Cooney.

Aug. 1987: The Return Of The Sugar Man: After Conquering Hagler, Now Aiming For Hearns? Plus: Boxing lists, Spinks-Cooney, Mike McCallum.

Sept. 1987: Mike Olajide Goes To War: "The Silk" Shows He's More Than Just Style. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Duane Thomas, Mike McCallum, dream fights.

Oct. 1987: Erasing The Doubts—Vinny Pazienza Proves He's A Phenom, Not A Phony. Plus: Mike Tyson, Williams-Cooper, Spinks-Cooney, George Foreman.

Nov. 1987: Down And Out In Las Vegas: Donald Curry's Crushing Fall. Plus: Duarte-Davila, Thomas Hearns, Meldrick Taylor.

Dec. 1987: Tyson vs. Biggs: The Frazier-Ali Of The '80s? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Miguel Lora, Shawn O'Sullivan, hardest hitters.

June 1989: Ranking Today's Top 30 Fighters. Plus: Taylor-Meekins, Starling-Honeyghan, Leonard-Hearns, Johnny Bos.

Aug. 1989: Leonard-Hearns: Dressed To Kill. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Larry Holmes, Michael Nunn.

Oct. 1989: Power! What Gives A Punch Its Cruch? Plus: Ray Robinson, Watson-Benn, Virgil Hill, Nunn-Barkley, Emile Griffith.

Dec. 1989: On The Money! Mike Tyson Kayos Carl Williams. Plus: Summer Sizzlers color insert, Julian Jackson, Anthony Hembrick, Camacho-Pazienza.

Feb. 1990: Leonard-Duran: An Analysis Of The Grudge Match. Plus: Leonard-Duran color insert, Whitaker-Nelson, Mike Tyson, Marlin Starling.

April 1990: Year-End Special: A Division-By-Division Analysis. Plus: Year-end color insert, Michael Spinks, the heavyweight legends reunite, Al Certo.

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Oct. 1991: 12 Angry Men—The Meanest Fighters In Boxing. Plus: Braddock, Mercer-Morrison, Orlando Canizales, meanest fighters, Year That Was: 1967.

Dec. 1991: Will A Few More Of These Finish Off Mike Tyson? Plus: Ezzard Charles, George Foreman, Holyfield-Tyson, Floyd Patterson, John David Jackson.

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Aug. 1992: Holmes Challenges Holyfield: The Old Man Has A Chance If ... Plus: Iran Barkley, Eddie Cook, The Year That Was: 1952, George Foreman.

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Feb. 1993: Chavez Tortures Camacho: Can He Become Greater Than Sugar Ray Robinson? Plus: Michael Nunn, Tim Littles, trainers, Foreman-Morrison preview.

April 1993: Riddick Bowe & Lennox Lewis Lead The Heavyweight Resurgence. Plus: Bowe-Holyfield round 10, Jemal Hinton, Dave Tiberi.

June 1993: The Old Man And The Fee: At $5-Million Per, George Foreman Will Never Retire. Plus: Morrison-Williams, Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Aug. 1993: Bowe, No! Can Jesse Ferguson Be 1993's Buster Douglas? Plus: Carbajal, Azumah, Harding-McCallum, Eric Griffin, next great heavyweight.

Dec. 1993: Riddick Bowe's Year In Preview: Lennox Lewis Is The Least Of His Problems. Plus: Michael Carbajal, Ali-Foreman, Ricardo Lopez, Larry Hazzard.

Feb. 1994: Chavez-Whitaker: Was The Fix In? Plus: Chiquita Gonzalez, overrated/underrated, Corbett-Choynski.

April 1994: Hungry At The Wrong Time: Has Riddick Bowe Become The New Buster Douglas? Plus: Michael Bentt, Buddy McGirt, Jorge Luis Gonzalez, George Dixon, Joe Gans, Joe Walcott.

Aug. 1994: Beating Bredahl Was No Oscar-Winning Peformance: Why De La Hoya Still Has A Lot To Prove. Plus: Christy Martin, overrated/underrated, Little-Nunn, Foreman-Holmes preview, Young Jack Thompson.

Oct. 1994: Michael Moorer's Image: Is It All Shadow & Light? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Egerton Marcus, John Michael Johnson, Gorilla Jones, Bowe-Donald preview.

Dec. 1994: Paz Survives Duran: "Pain Is Temporary, Pride Is Forever." Plus: Pernell Whitaker, Julio Cesar Chavez, Tony Green, Patterson-Kelley preview, George Godfrey.

Jan. 1995: Who Are Boxing's Real Warriors? Plus: Riddick Bowe, Marty Jakubowski, super middleweights, Bob Armstrong.

Feb. 1995 (84-Page Special): The Experts Debate: Pernell Whitaker—The Greatest Fighter Of His Era ... Or The Most Overrated? Plus: Greatest fighters who never won title, boxing's bad boys, pro debuts, Bruce Flowers.

April 1995: George Foreman (1974) vs. George Foreman (1995). Plus: Riddick Bowe, cheap-shot artists, catchweight fights, Young Peter Jackson.

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Winter 1996: Myth vs. Reality. In Search Of The True Tyson (color). Plus: Lonnie Bradley, George Foreman & HBO, Bowe-Golota II preview.

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March 2001: The Ultimate Boxing Ratings. Plus: Tyson-Golota, Marco Antonio Barrera, Joel Cassamayor.

Nov. 2001: It's Time To Flex Your Muscles, Roy: Fight The Trinidad-Hopkins Winner Next! Plus: Laila-Jacqui, Floyd Mayweather, greatest upsets.

July 2002: Jones vs. Hopkins: What Will Happen When The Trash Talk Stops. Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Arturo Gatti, Wayne McCullough, De La Hoya-Vargas preview, great junior middleweight moments.

Nov. 2002: Lennox Lewis—Is He The Best Heavyweight Since Muhammad Ali? Plus: Naseem Hamed, Kostya Tszyu, Diobelys Hurtado, Rocky Juarez, 10 fights that transcended boxing.

Feb. 2003: Can Anyone Wipe The Smile Off Oscar's Face? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Eric Lucas, Jesse James Leija, Shane Mosley, 10 all-time most exciting fighters.

June 2003: Lennox's Legacy On The Line: Will He Be Toppled In '03? Plus: Fernando Vargas, Arturo Gatti, 2002 in review.

Oct. 2003: Hall Call: Today's Best Fighters—Who's Headed To Canastota? Plus: Hasim Rahman, Mayweather-De La Hoya, Miguel Barrera, Winky Wright, Roy Jones, heavyweight flops.

May 2004: Vitali Klitschko: Another Step Toward "World Domination." Plus: Shane Mosley, junior middle report card, when losers win, 2003 in review.

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Dec. 2004: What's Next? Has Mike Tyson Run Out Of Options? Plus: Gatti & Leija, Kermit Cintron, Floyd Mayweather, British boxing slump, ultimate ratings, featherweight report card.

April 2005: Tszyu Erases Mitchell ... And All Doubts. Plus: Roy Jones, Judah-Spinks preview, Travis Simms, Carl Thompson, Bernard Hopkins, old age.

Dec. 2005: Corrales vs. Castillo: Can The Rematch Measure Up To The Original? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Taylor-Hopkins, Kevin McBride, Zab Judah, great rematch fighters, middleweight report card.

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Winter 2006: Morales vs. Pacquiao: If You Think You Know Who's Gonna Win ... Think Again! Plus: Vargas & Gatti, Angelo Dundee, Carl Froch, second-generation fighters, fighting past 40, 20 greatest Puerto Ricans.

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New Faces

(Continued from Page 26)

"It was so tough," Bey said. "I gave up so much throughout the years. I gave up a lot of my childhood. I went to the gym every single day for years. I missed my prom; I missed homecoming for boxing. It was just painful. Then watching the guy who ended up winning in my weight class (Russia's Aleksei Tishchenko), I knew I would have got that gold medal. But I know things happen the way they're supposed to happen."

Bey promised himself that when he turned pro, he would make up for his Olympic disappointment by winning titles and dominating divisions. That plan hasn't quite unfolded as he'd hoped, however.

Mickey and younger brother Cortez Bey signed with Roy Jones' Square Ring Promotions upon leaving the unpaid ranks. Lacking shows and television dates, Jones struggled to keep the Beys busy. The brothers decided to bolt after 2005, when Mickey had four fights and Cortez only three. "I know deep in Roy's heart, he meant well," Mickey said. "We stayed in contact whenever I needed him. Maybe at that time, he just wasn't ready."

Stuck in contractual limbo, Mickey was sidelined throughout 2006. He wound up fighting for co-promoters in Antonio Leonard and Gary Shaw, who helped get Bey eight bouts and two appearances on Showtime's *ShoBox* series in 2007 and 2008.

Bey made his national television debut by blowing out Castulo Gonzalez in two rounds in October 2007. He returned to *ShoBox* four months later, only to win an eight-round stinker against Roberto Acevedo, a late-sub whose primary focus was survival. Acevedo was also the first southpaw Bey had fought as a pro. Regardless, Bey was lost in the shadow of Alfredo Angulo, whose one-round stoppage of Ricardo Cortes in the main event propelled him to HBO, where he's been a regular ever since.

Meanwhile, Bey has yet to return to national TV. In 2009, he shook up his team again, this time bringing in high-powered manager Dunkin and deep-pocketed promoter Koerner.

With Koerner willing to pay to get his fighters on other promoters' cards, Bey had three bouts in the final four months of 2009. "We're definitely making up for lost time on him," said Dunkin, who had Bey scheduled to fight February 27 in Georgia for a minor belt.

"We're not going to mess around and wait for 25 fights," said Bey. "This guy's ready to go. Jeff (Mayweather) keeps telling me, what are we waiting for?"

Bey said he never lost his focus and discipline during all those months between fights. A self-described gym rat, Bey trains year round and claims to never smoke or drink.

"I got this gift," he said. "To come from where I come from, to have this gift, I won't let anything that simple get in the way of it. I won't let anything ruin it."

Bey grew up in a two-parent household in the rough Union-Miles Park neighborhood on Cleveland's east side, the same area that spawned promoter Don King. "Fighting was second nature to me," Bey said. He avoided falling into the drugs and violence that surrounded him, however, thanks largely to watchful parents.

"They kept us active and stayed on us," Bey said of his folks. "I thank my parents for that. Most kids, they don't have a chance to grow up with both parents these days. That definitely helped. If it wasn't for them, I don't know if I'd be where I am now."

Bey excelled in several sports, including football, tennis, and track, but there was something about fighting that obsessed him. He never took karate lessons, but Bey idolized martial-arts legend Bruce Lee, whose discipline and willpower still inspires Bey. Young Mickey also loved watching the fight films collected by his grandfather, a Golden Gloves champion back in his day, especially the footage of Sugar Ray Robinson.

At age 12, Bey walked into the PAL No. 3 gym in Cleveland. The trainer

Bey has Rashad Ganaway retreating during an eight-round decision victory for Bey back in August 2009. It marked Bey's first action of 2009 after reshuffling his team. Now Bey is looking to move forward under the guidance of new manager Cameron Dunkin and trainer Jeff Mayweather.

there, Forrest Caldwell, told him to show up three days a week. Bey was there six. Having watched so much footage of Robinson, Bey was mimicking Sugar Ray's footwork and triple hooks from the start. Within four months, he was sparring with national champions. Within a year, he'd won his first national tournament.

Mickey Bey Sr. began training his son a couple years later after several gyms closed on the east side. He also worked a bit with Emanuel Steward at the Kronk Gym in Detroit. By age 15, however, Bey had it in his mind that he was destined to train with Floyd Mayweather Sr. As it turned out, the Bey brothers did train with Floyd Sr. at the start of their respective careers. They made the switch to his younger brother, Jeff, two years ago. "I know Jeff is just as good as a trainer," Bey said. "He's young and he's healthy. Me and Cortez, we like Jeff as well, in and out of the ring."

When asked if Bey is ready to fight for titles, Jeff Mayweather told a story of being cornered by HBO's Larry Merchant in September 1998, when the two were in Tijuana for the Erik Morales-Junior Jones fight. Mayweather's nephew, Floyd Jr., was scheduled to face veteran Genaro Hernandez for his first title belt. Floyd Jr. was 21 years old, with 16 pro fights, and Merchant wanted to know why he was being rushed. "I said, 'Hey, my nephew is ready. He's been ready to win a title, four or five fights ago,'" Jeff Mayweather recalled. Of course, his nephew wound up dominating Hernandez.

"That's exactly how I feel about Mickey," Jeff added. "I feel Mickey is just as ready as Floyd when he challenged for the title. He's ready for any champion at his weight."

Bey has absorbed the pain of not getting to fight in Athens. He's swallowed the frustration of watching other '04 Olympians fight for titles and big paydays, while he's been relegated to un-televised six-round undercard bouts. Bey has taken it all like bitter medicine that will leave him stronger when his moment finally arrives.

"It's made me a lot tougher," Bey said. "It's made me so hungry. All it can do is make you or break you. It's made me. I'm so ready. When I get the opportunity, I'm definitely going to take advantage.

"Cleveland can look forward to having a great champion and a Hall of Famer. I'm not going to let them down. They can count on me." ■

Don Stewart is a Pennsylvania-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to THE RING.

"Super Six" Stage 2

Carl Froch

Main Event 12 Rounds

Mikkel Kessler

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Despite their top-10 rankings in the 168-pound class, Carl Froch and Mikkell Kessler are looking for redemption.

Froch, the WBC super middleweight titlist, could use a superlative showing to erase the ugly image of his last fight, against Andre Dirrell in Stage 1 of Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic." Kessler is in damage-control mode, trying to distance himself from his worst performance as a pro, an 11th-round technical decision loss to Andre Ward in Stage 1.

Now Frock and Kessler will meet in Stage 2 of the modified round-robin super middleweight tournament, April 17, at a site that had yet be determined as of press time.

Froch would like to make amends for a sloppy, uninspiring split-decision victory over Dirrell in October 2009. The match looked more like a rugby scrum than a world-class fight, with both contestants clinching and grabbing. It grew so bad that Dirrell was penalized a point for excessive holding in the 10th round, before "The Cobra" walked away with a dubious decision victory to retain the WBC belt.

Kessler, on the other hand, is in more dire straights. He was handled, and handled quite easily, by Ward. The Dane appeared slow, lethargic, and as each round passed, anyone who had seen Kessler fight previously had to wonder who that was in the ring with Ward during the November 2009 bout.

Ward not only wrested the WBA belt away from "The Viking Warrior," he may have damaged his image as much as he did his record. Against the former U.S. Olympian, Kessler was exposed as a plodding, easy-to-hit, unimaginative fighter. In an attempt to improve his chances against Froch, Kessler fired trainer Ricard Olsen and elevated assistant trainer Jimmy Montoya for the Froch fight.

Hopefully, one of them will emerge with a clear-cut victory, his image burnished and his future bright.

Carl Froch

Mikkel Kessler

Record and World Rating

Froch nails Dirrell

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Kessler bounces a shot off Sartison

PHOTO BY KELD NAVNTOFT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Is 26-0 with 20 knockouts ... Began boxing at home at nine-years old ... Won two ABA middleweight titles in 1999 ... Won bronze at World Amateur boxing championships in '01 ... Made pro debut in March '02 at relatively late age of 25 ... Won vacant British super middleweight title in '04 ... Made eight successful defenses ... Fought first 15 pro bouts in the UK before fighting in the United States in April '05 ... Won vacant WBC super middleweight title in December '08 ... Made two successful title defenses ... Second title defense also marked first bout of "Super Six" tournament ... Ranked number three at super middleweight by THE RING.

Is 42-2 with 32 knockouts ... Enjoyed sterling 47-3 amateur career, including a gold medal at the European Youth Championships in Turkey ... Turned pro March 1998 at 19, winning by first-round knockout ... Won seven of his first 10 bouts by knockout ... Captured first pro title in November '02 ... Stepped in as replacement in November '04 to annex the WBA super middleweight belt ... Defended title successfully four times before losing it to Joe Calzaghe in November '07 ... Regained WBA strap in June '08 and made two defenses before losing it to Andre Ward ... Ranked number four at super middleweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Froch crushes Taylor

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Kessler stings Calzaghe

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

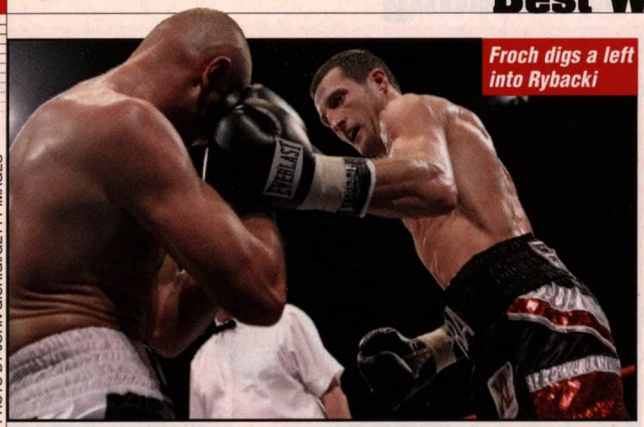
Is 32 years old ... Stands 6'1" with 74½-inch reach ... Lean, muscular frame ... Good power ... Reasonably fast hands ... Outstanding recuperative powers ... Physically and mentally strong ... Usually in great shape ... Rarely cuts.

Is 30 years old ... Stands 6'1" with 73-inch reach ... Athletic physique ... Has maintained power from 154 to 168 pounds ... Heavy Hands ... Conditioned to fight at brisk pace ... Solid chin ... Prone to cuts.

Carl Froch

Mikkel Kessler

Best Weapons



Froch digs a left into Rybacki

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Thunderous right hand that still carries a kayo kick in late rounds ... Strong jab ... Hand speed and reflexes make him dangerous counterpuncher ... Able to maintain fast pace without tiring ... Great heart and determination.

Kessler punishes Andrade

PHOTO BY MOGENS FLINDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Excellent 1-2 combination ... Possesses perilous right uppercut, which stunned Joe Calzaghe in the early going ... Good hand speed ... Throws double and sometimes triple jabs ... Snappy but underused left hook.

Previous Fight

Won a messy, awkward affair by split-decision over former U.S. Olympian Andre Dirrell to retain WBC super middleweight title and claim opening bout of "Super Six" ... Used roughhouse tactics to handle Dirrell's southpaw style and fast hands ... Course of the fight changed in Dirrell's favor late, when he stopped running and let his hands go on a more regular basis ... Dirrell had point deducted in 10th, losing 115-112 on two scorecards and taking the third 114-113.

Suffered worst defeat of career in 11th-round technical decision loss to former U.S. Olympic gold medalist Andre Ward, which cost him the WBA super middleweight belt ... Unable to cope with Ward's speed and boxing skills, he was pretty much dominated from start to finish ... Ward was ahead 98-92 on two scorecards and 97-93 on another when fight was stopped on cuts after the 11th round ... Defeat considered a mild upset, since Kessler entered the Super Six as the co-favorite.

Quality of Opposition

Fought in relative obscurity throughout most of early career in England ... Won minor regional title by dismantling Alan Page (KO 7) in November '03 ... Added British Commonwealth super middleweight title with victory over Charles Adamu (W 12) in March '04 ... Successfully defended title eight times ... Stepped up level of opposition in November '07 when he handed Robin Reid a five-round thrashing ... Won vacant WBC super middle title by scoring unanimous decision over Jean Pascal in December '08 ... Has successfully defended twice, coming off floor to stop Jermain Taylor (KO 12) in April '09 and handing Andre Dirrell his first pro loss in forgettable split-decision victory to open Super Six competition.

Carefully protected early, fighting in Denmark against modest opposition ... Won first major test over shopworn Dingaan Thobela in November '02 (W 12) ... Scored impressive first-round kayo over Julio Cesar Green in March '04 ... Won WBA super middleweight title with unanimous decision over Anthony Mundine in Australia in June '05 ... Successfully defended title against Eric Lucas (KO 10), Markus Beyer (KO 3), and Librado Andrade (W 12) ... Took big step up and lost to super middle world champion Joe Calzaghe (L 12) in November '07 ... Regained WBA belt by decisioning Dimitri Sartison for vacant title in June '08 ... Two successful title defenses followed before the technical decision loss to Andre Ward.

Defense

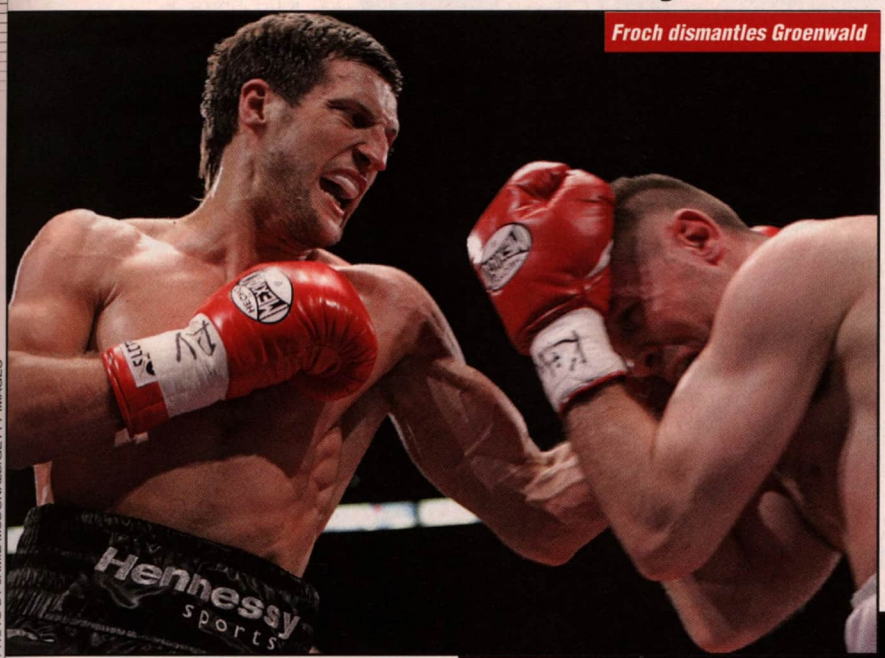
Relatively easy target ... Aggression and pressure are his best defense ... Strong chin enables him to respond well when hit ... Relies on head fakes to avoid punches ... Can be countered by speedy opponents ... Has trouble getting out of the way of straight left hand.

Far from a defensive wizard ... Doesn't employ distance very well ... Slower afoot than he was a few years ago ... Decent head movement make him elusive against slow-moving opponents ... Vulnerable to inside attack ... Sturdy chin ... Never been dropped or badly hurt.

Carl Froch

Mikkel Kessler

Style



Froch dismantles Groenwald

PHOTO BY JAMIE MCDONALD/GETTY IMAGES

Stand-up, European style ... Aggressive combination puncher ... Tough and determined ... Keeps trying even when things are going badly ... Tends to fight rhythmically, making him susceptible to foes who can time his attack and catch him moving in ... Rarely clinches ... Can't fight as well going backwards ... Can be out boxed from the outside.

Aggressive pressure fighter with taunting, head-bobbing approach ... Keeps hands too low for his own good ... Likes to entice opponents into thinking he's easy prey and then pounces ... Knows how to cut off the ring ... Carries power into the late rounds, so he's never out of the fight until the final bell ... Relies heavily on right hand.

Kessler bores in on Beyer

PHOTO BY FRIEDEMANN VOGEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

The Questions

Can he get off to a fast start? Can he survive Kessler's punching power? Will he make the mistake of underestimating Kessler, based on the Dane's last performance? How much longer can he pull fights out in the waning rounds?

Which version of Kessler will show up? Can he rebound physiologically and psychologically from the pasting he took against Ward? Will his style be any different under a new trainer? Can he withstand Froch's power and pressure?

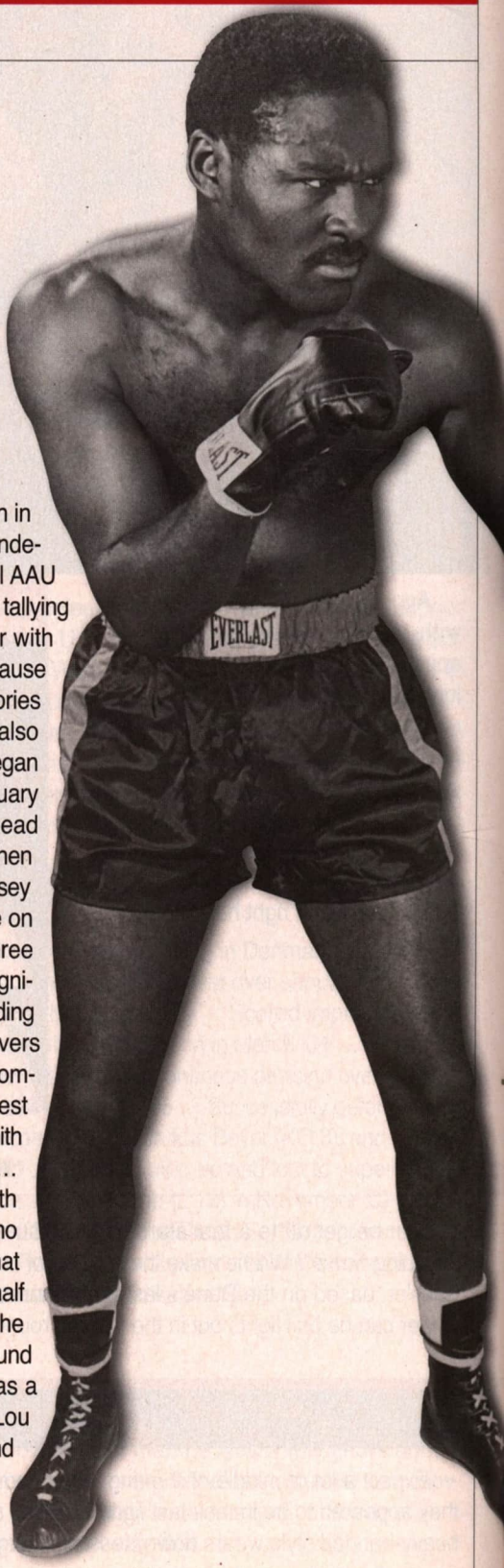
The Outcome

Expect a lot of middle-of-the-ring, back-and-forth exchanges early, as both will be eager to prove that they are better than they appeared to be in their last fight. Don't be surprised if Froch tastes the canvas before it's over, but in the end his grinding, heavy-handed style wears down Kessler enough to allow the Englishman to take a close, entertaining decision.

Hall of Fame Profile

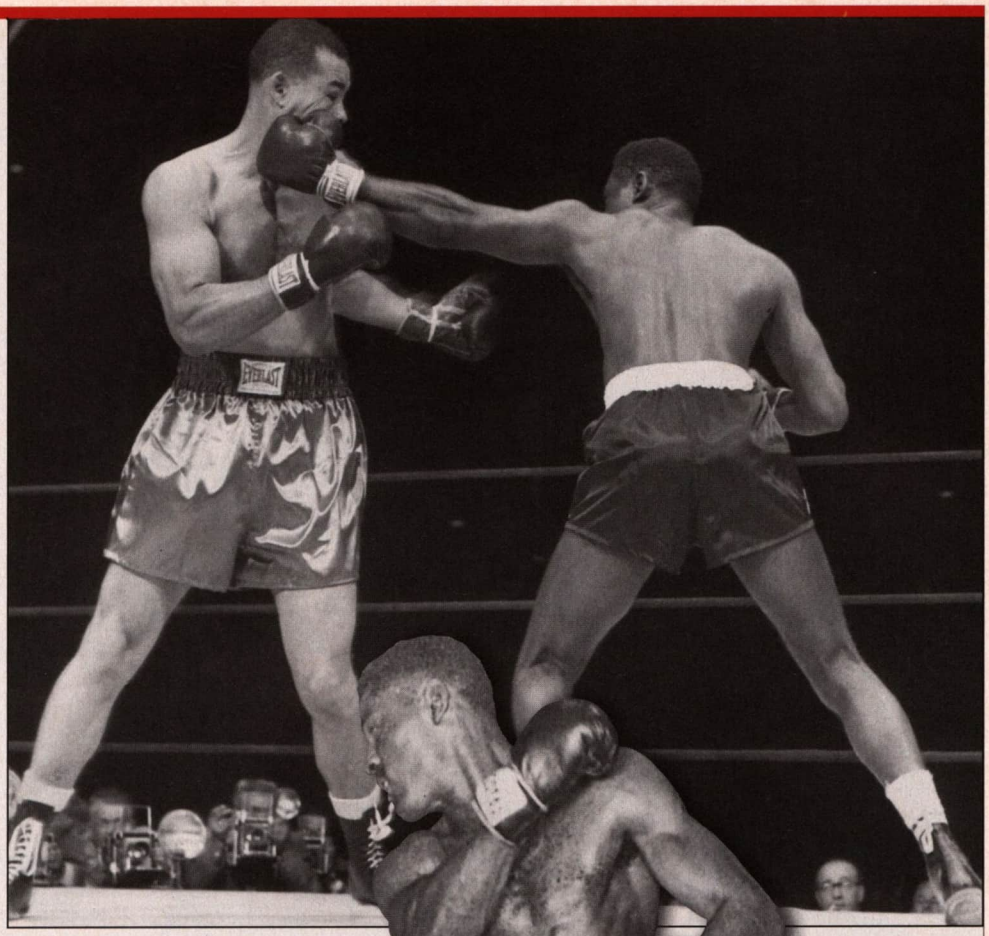
THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

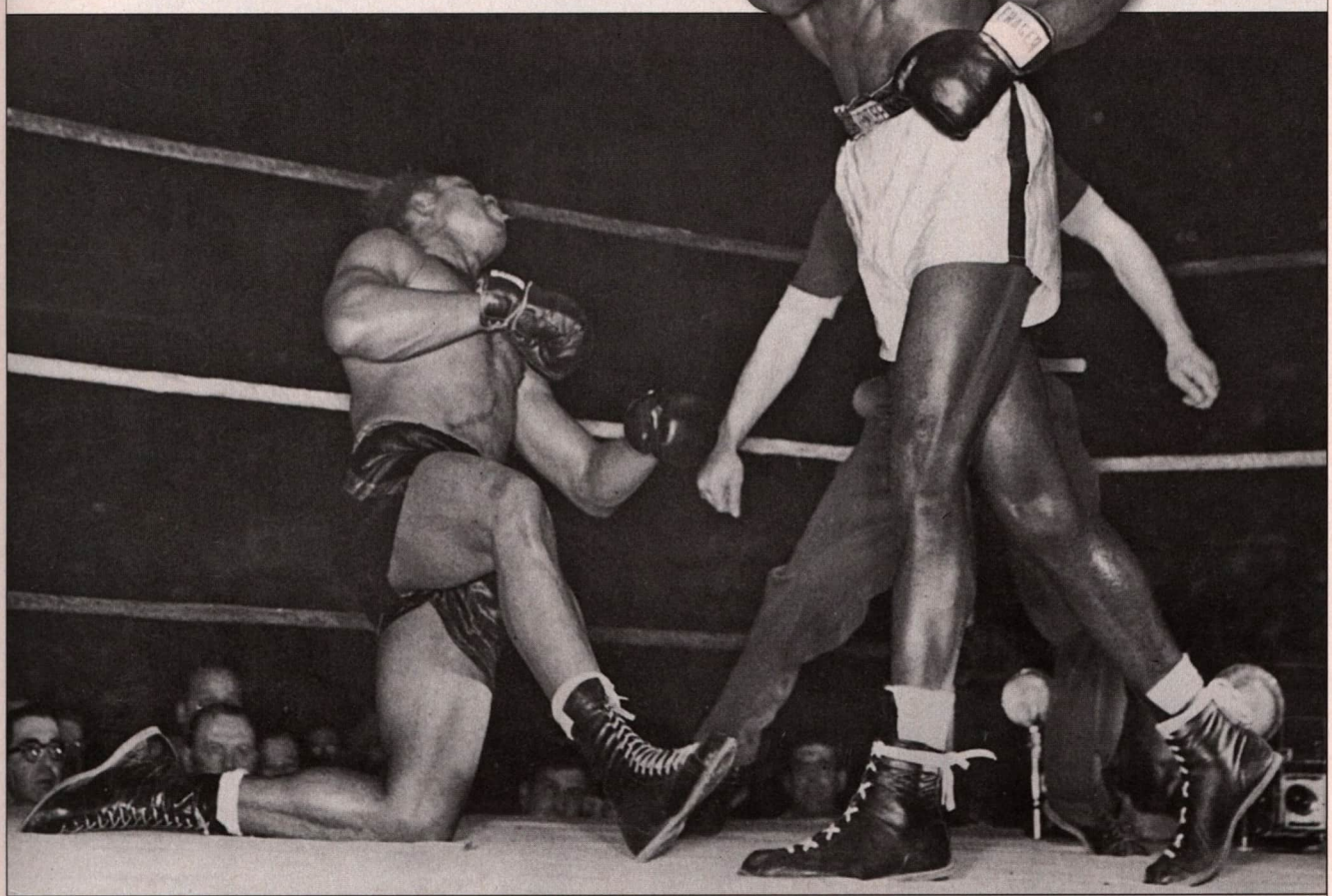
Ezzard Charles



Birthdate: July 7, 1921
Date of Death: May 27, 1975
Birthplace: Lawrenceville, Georgia
Nickname: The Cincinnati Cobra
Weight Classes: Middleweight, light heavyweight, heavyweight
Record: 93-15-1 (52)
Titles Held: World and NBA heavyweight
Best Performances: Joe Louis (W 15), Jersey Joe Walcott (W 15, W 15), Archie Moore (W 10, W10, KO 8), Charley Burley (W 10, W 10), Jimmy Bivins (W10, KO 4, W 10, W10), Gus Lesnevich (KO 7), Joey Maxim (W 10, W 10, W 15, W 12), Lee Oma (KO 10), Tommy Harrison (KO 9), Lloyd Marshall (KO 6, KO 2), Rex Layne (KO 11), Rocky Marciano (L 15, KO by 8)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1990
Background: Arguably the best light heavyweight of all-time … Was born in Georgia but raised in Cincinnati … Took up boxing as a teenager and went undefeated in 42 amateur bouts … Won Chicago Golden Gloves and the National AAU middleweight championship before turning pro as a middleweight in March 1940, tallying a third-round kayo of Medley Johnson in Middletown, Ohio … A terrific boxer with outstanding footwork and a hard punch, he moved up to light heavyweight because he was unable to secure a title shot at 160 pounds … Despite impressive victories over Archie Moore, Charley Burley, and Joey Maxim at 175 pounds, he was also unable to get a crack at the light heavy title … Although slightly undersized, he began fighting heavyweights in 1946 and continued to score solid victories … In February '49, he knocked out Sam Baroudi in Chicago, and when Baroudi died of a head ainjury afterward, Charles was deeply affected and almost gave up boxing … When Joe Louis retired, Charles, riding a 15-bout winning streak, was matched with Jersey Joe Walcott for the vacant National Boxing Association (NBA) heavyweight title on June 22, 1949, in Chicago … Charles won a 15-round decision and made three successful defenses before outpointing comebacking Louis to win universal recognition as world heavyweight champion … Made four additional title defenses, including a rematch with Walcott ... Although he fought in Louis' shadow, astute observers knew how good he was: "Some day, maybe, the public is going to abandon comparisons with Joe Louis and accept Ezzard Charles for what he was—the best fist-fighter of his particular time," wrote Pulitzer-prize winning sportswriter Red Smith … Lost heavyweight title to Walcott via seventh-round knockout in a third bout … Also lost fourth fight with Walcott, in March '51 … Continued to campaign with mixed results and garnered a shot at reigning heavyweight champ Rocky Marciano in June '54. Marciano prevailed via close decision in a bitterly contested fight that earned the challenger a rematch three months later … Split Marciano's nose in half in their second war but was battered into an eighth-round knockout victim by the rampaging champion … Fought on until September 1959, when he lost a 10-round decision to Alvin Green in his final bout … After quitting the ring, he worked as a safety inspector, nightclub bouncer, and a wrestler before falling victim to Lou Gehrig's Disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) and becoming wheelchair bound the last years of his life, finally dying of the disease in 1975 … In 1976, Cincinnati recognized Charles by changing Lincoln Park Drive to Ezzard Charles Drive … THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1949 and '50.

Although he'd reigned as NBA heavyweight champions since 1949, Charles was not widely accepted as the legitimate world champion until he decisioned a badly faded Joe Louis in September 1950.





Charles sends Archie Moore to the floor en route to a knockout victory. Charles is considered by many to be the best 175-pounder of all-time.

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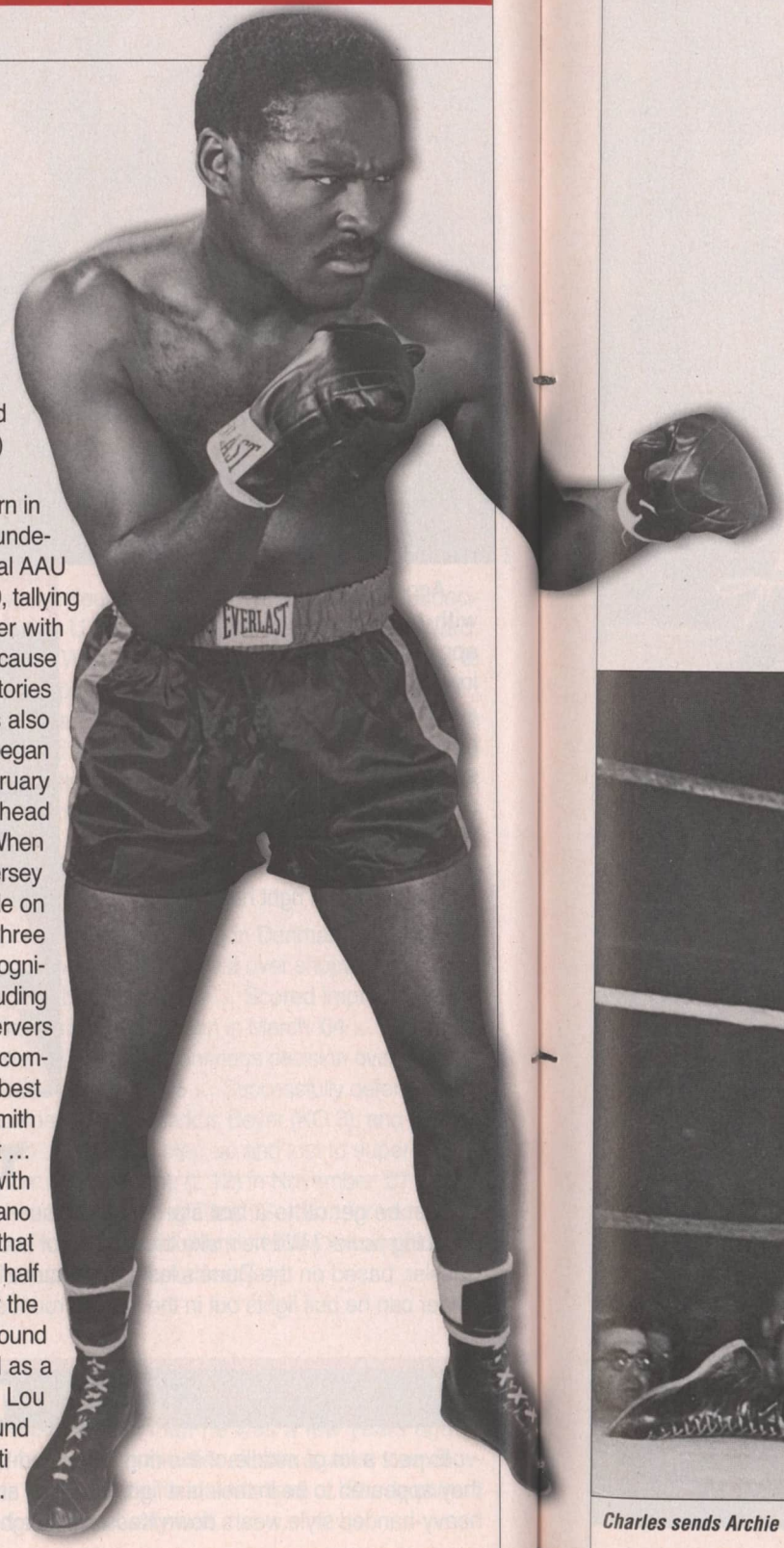

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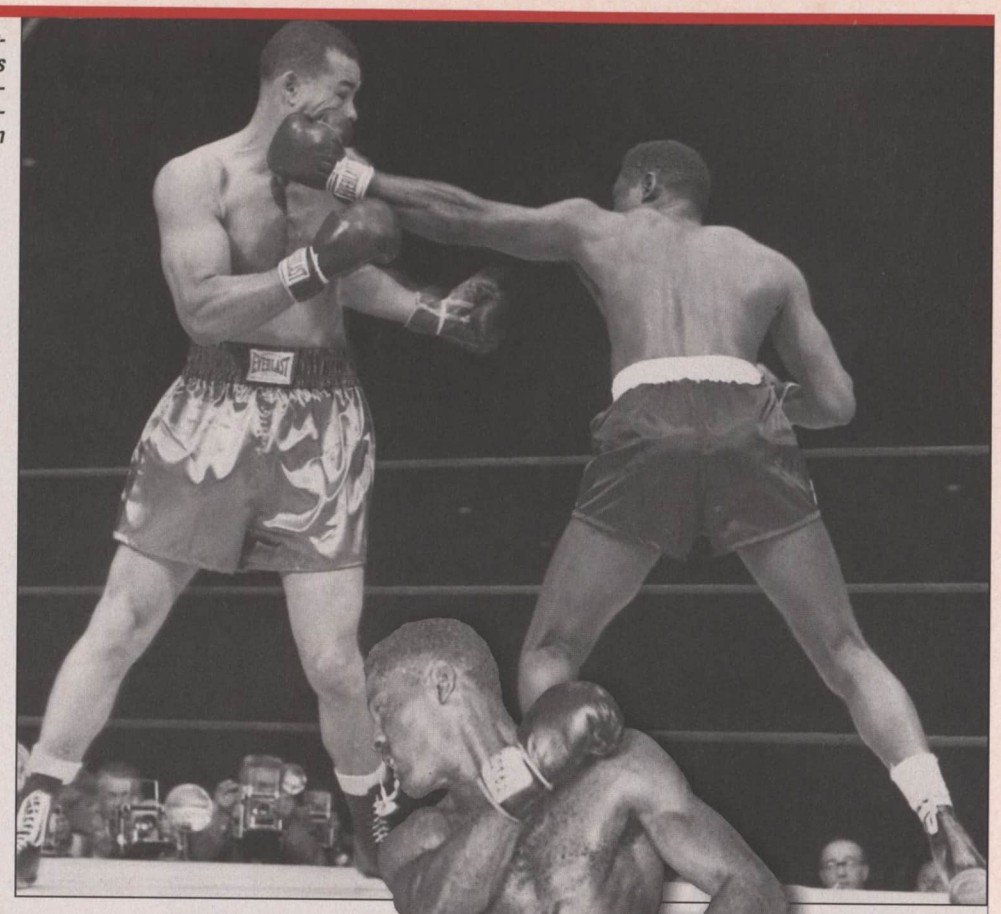
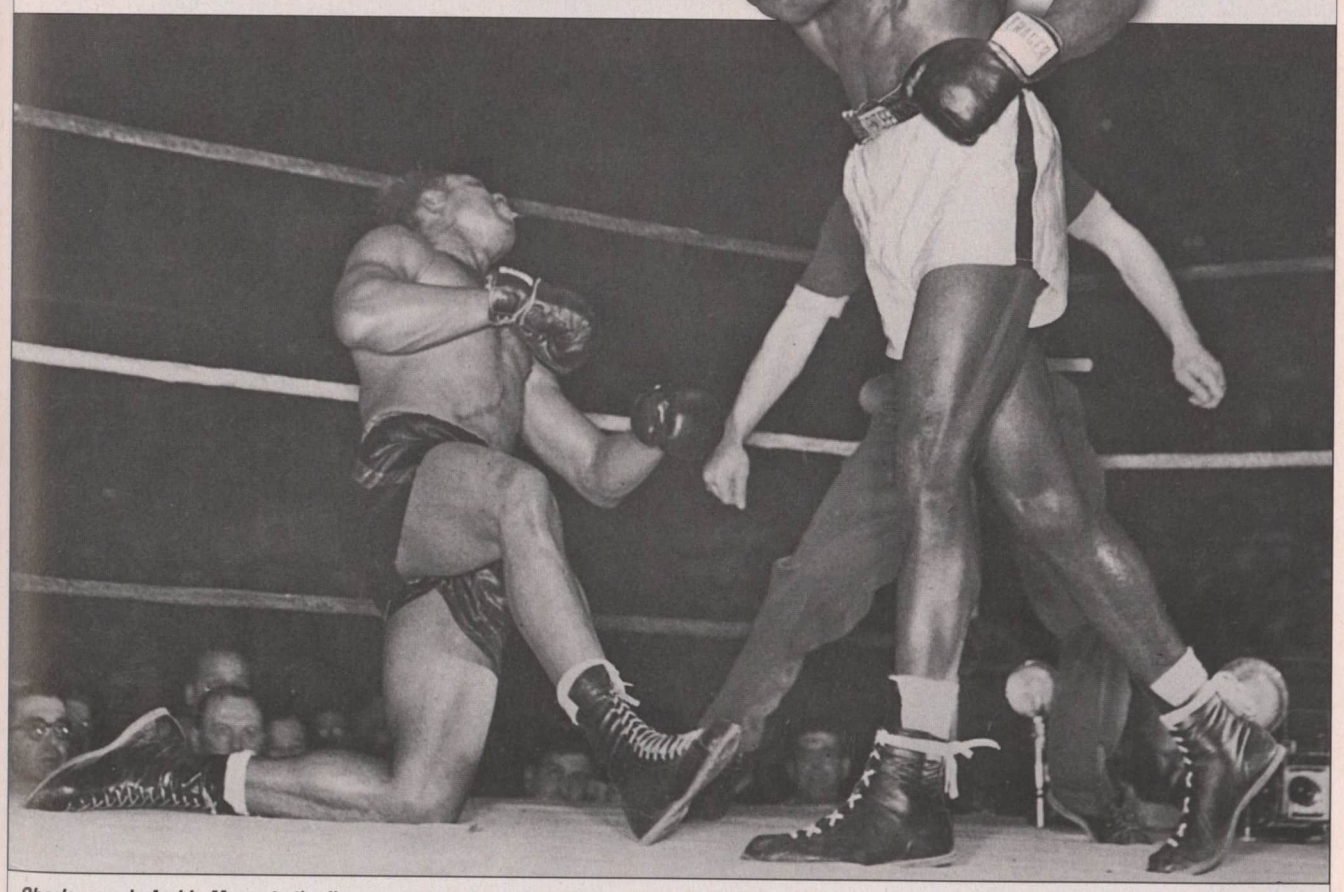
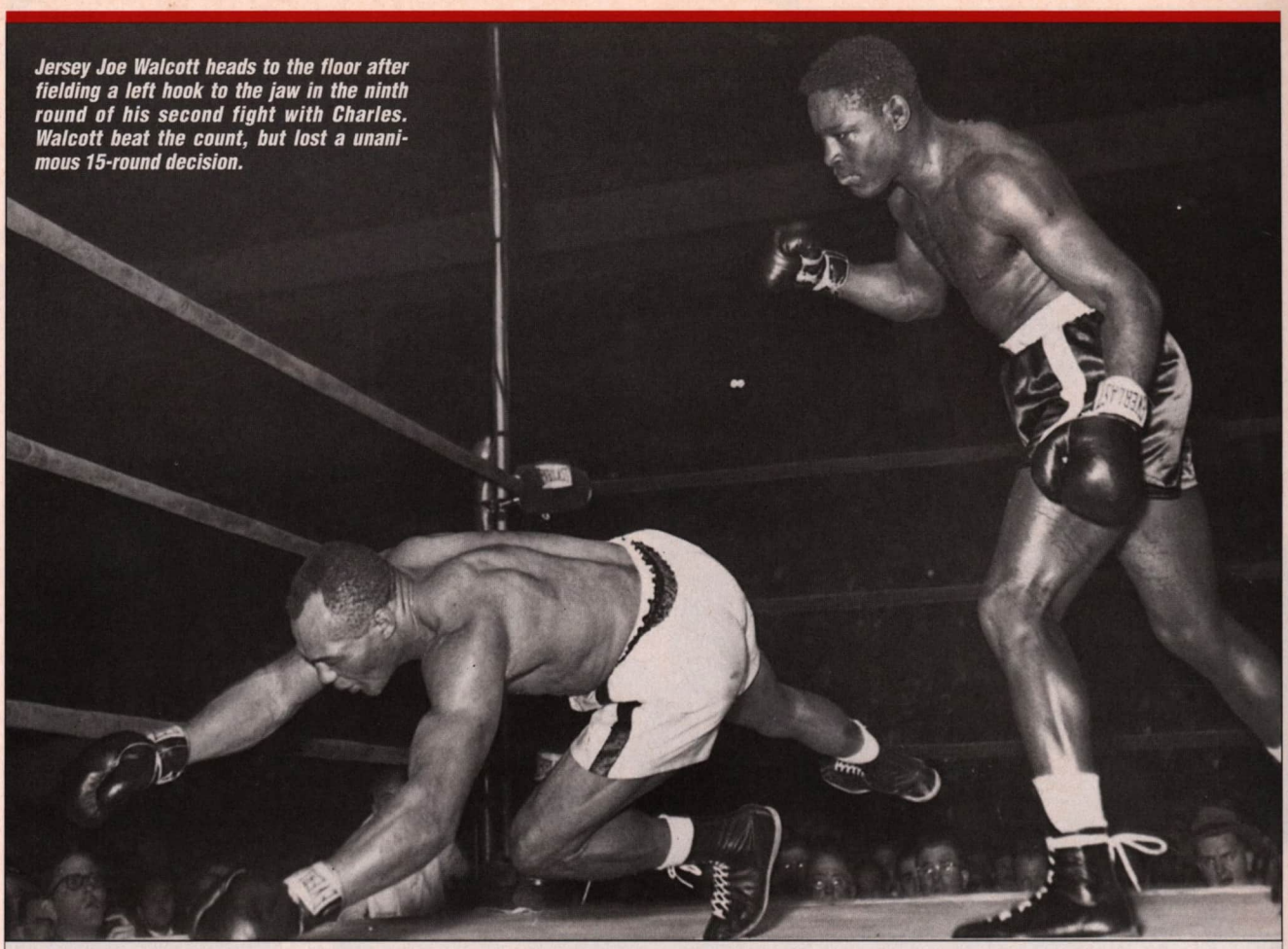
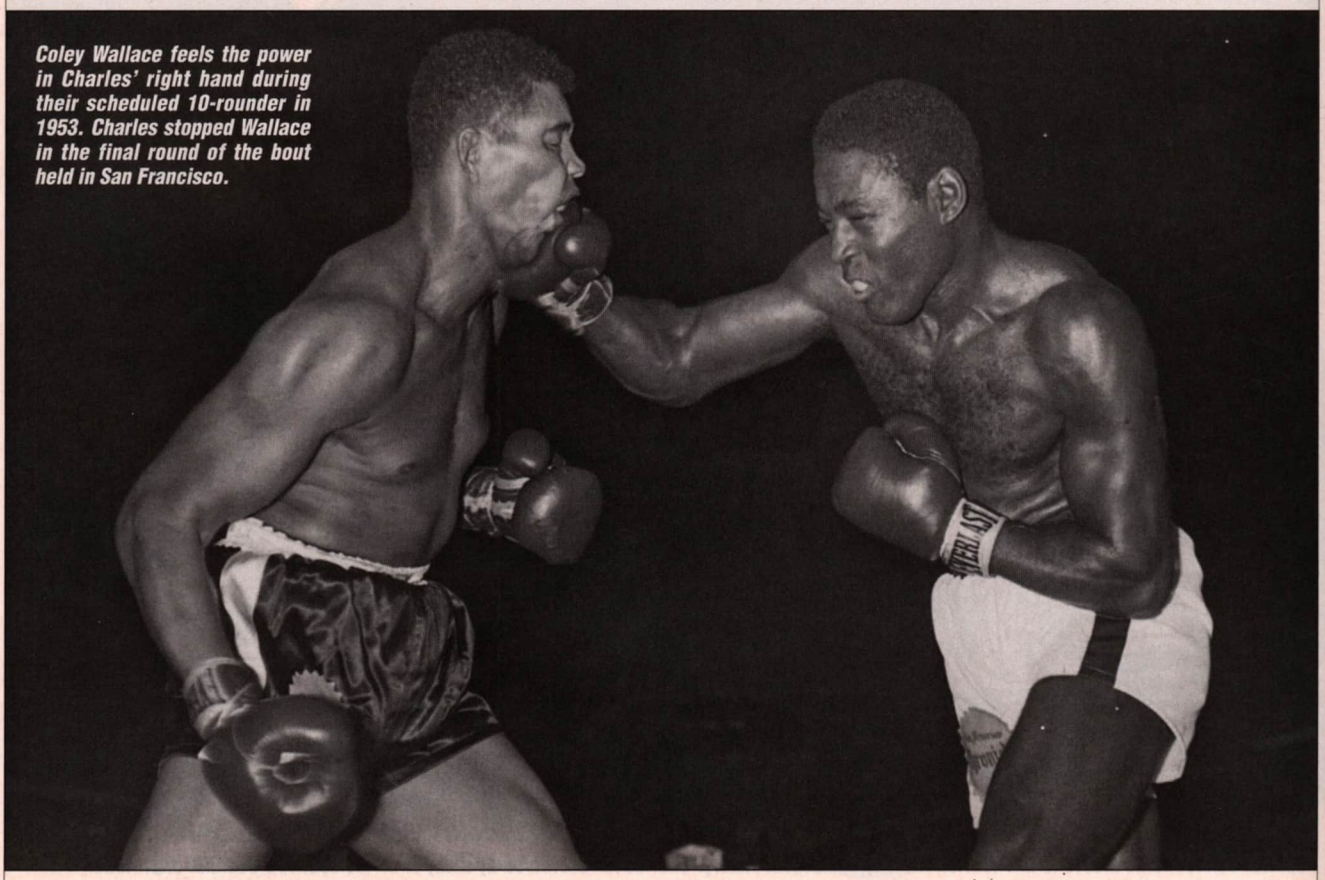




Charles sends Archie Moore to the floor en route to a knockout victory. Charles is considered by many to be the best 175-pounder of all-time.

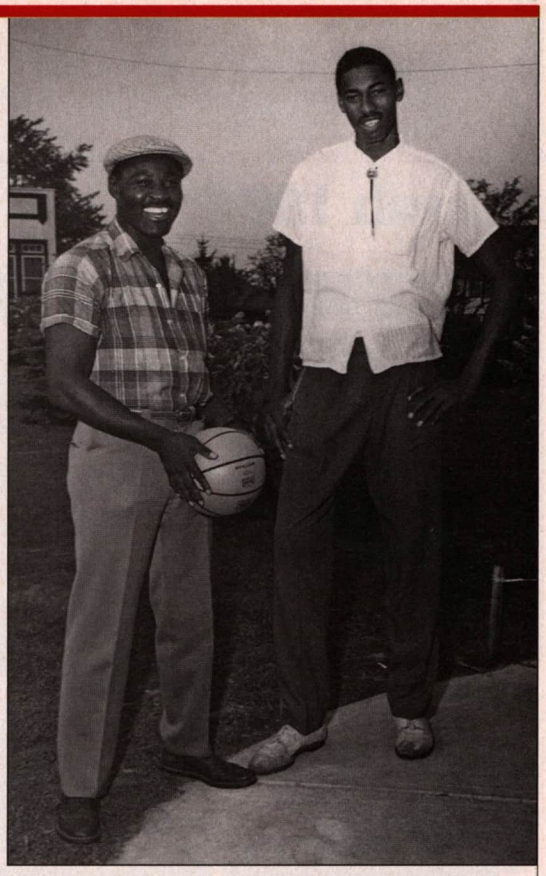


Jersey Joe Walcott heads to the floor after fielding a left hook to the jaw in the ninth round of his second fight with Charles. Walcott beat the count, but lost a unanimous 15-round decision.



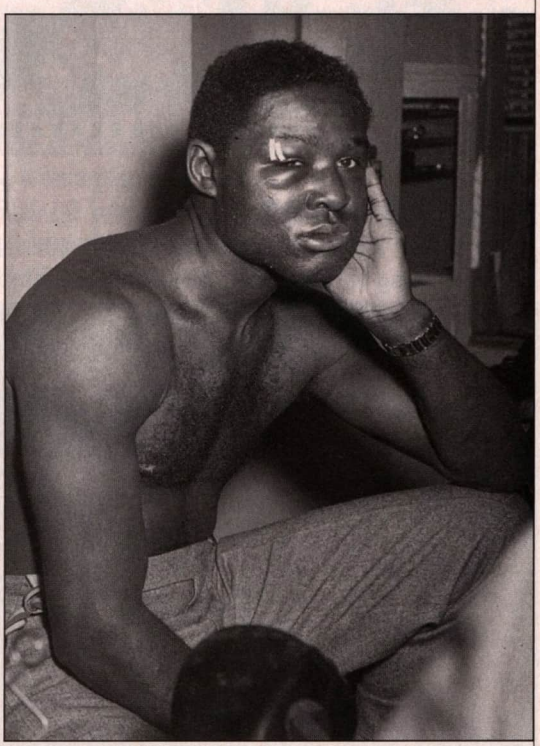
Coley Wallace feels the power in Charles' right hand during their scheduled 10-rounder in 1953. Charles stopped Wallace in the final round of the bout held in San Francisco.

Visiting royalty: Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson stop by the gym for the publicity photo with Charles. All three are now enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame.



A rare photo of Charles and legendary basketball player Wilt Chamberlain, taken while Chamberlain was still a student at Philadelphia's Overbrook High School.

Editor Nat Fleischer presents a beaming Charles with his RING magazine championship belt.

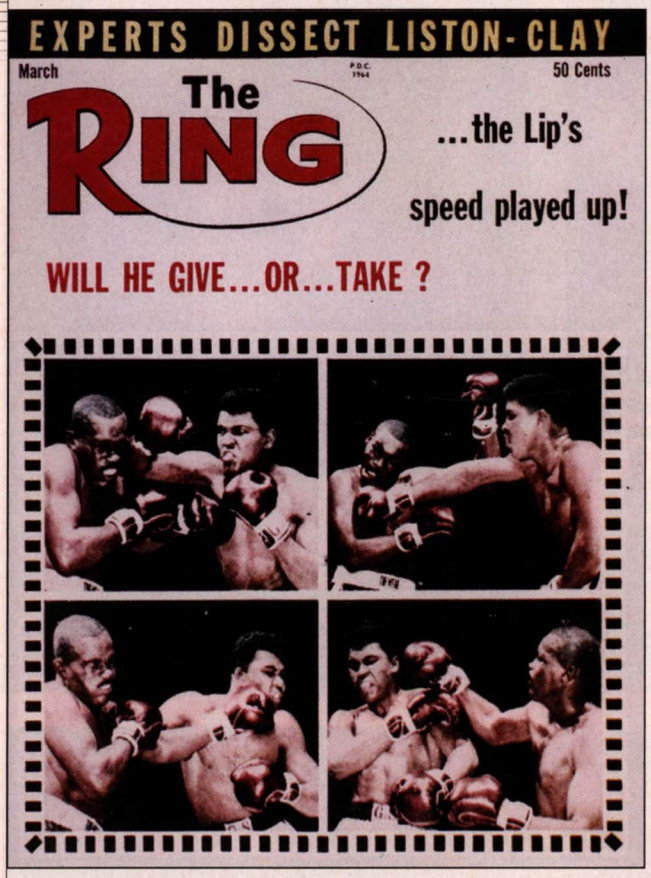


This is how Charles looked after 15 give-and-take rounds with heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano. Although Charles failed in his bid to regain the title, his brave stand against the murderous-hitting "Brockton Blockbuster" earned him much admiration and a rematch.

[THE RING Flashback]

Through the years with "The Bible of Boxing"

March 1964



COVER STORY: "Experts Dissect Liston-Clay" is just one of three articles in this issue about the upcoming fight between heavyweight champion Sonny Liston and challenger Cassius Clay. Not surprisingly, most of the experts polled pick Liston to win.

World Champions

(for the period ended January 22, 1964)

Heavyweight: Sonny Liston
Light Heavyweight: Willie Pastrano
Middleweight: Joey Giardello
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Eddie Perkins
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Sugar Ramos
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Hiroyuki Ebihara

"It is my opinion that when Sonny loses his crown it will be to a heavyweight who possesses skill combined with hitting power, and not merely the skill which we know Clay has," writes Nat Fleischer, editor of THE RING.

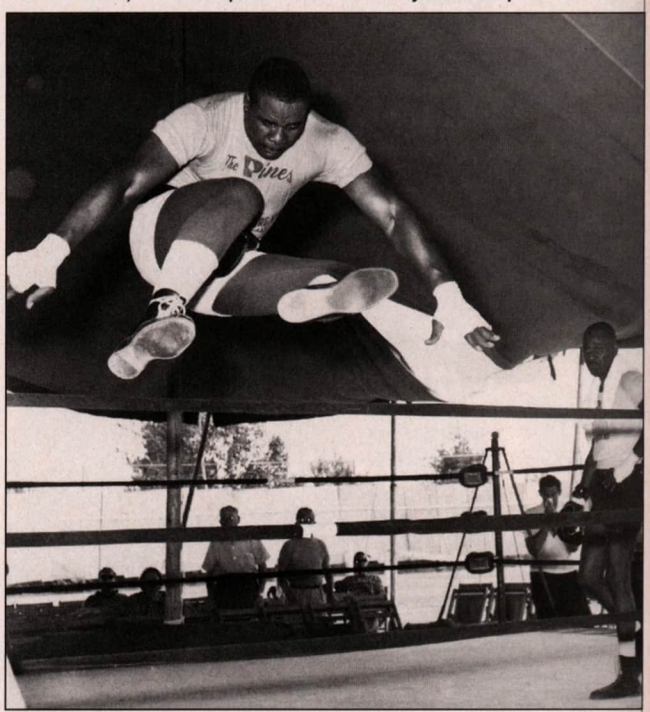
The majority of Liston supporters predict a quick kayo. The *New York World-Telegram*'s Lester Bromberg not only predicts the round in which it would end, but also the time: "Toward the close of the (first) round there will be two left hooks, and Clay will be carried to his corner. The time? 2:52."

RING contributor Lew Eskin, copying Clay's rhyming style of prognostication, writes: "Cassius, like Paterson, has pride and will not run. Therefore he will fall in one."

Former heavyweight champ Jersey Joe Walcott, however, isn't so confident that Liston is a sure thing: "Clay has a chance. His legs and his youth may carry him a lot farther than the experts figure."

Managing Editor Nat Loubet is also among those who think the challenger just might spring an upset: "The chances of Clay fighting as well as he talks are small, but he is underestimated by many. If his mental attitude matches his big mouth, we might see a surprise."

"Liston Moves, Thinks Too Slowly" is by none other than Cassius Clay (as told to associate editor Dan Daniel) who is spot on in his analysis and predictions.



Liston: Slow but surprisingly agile

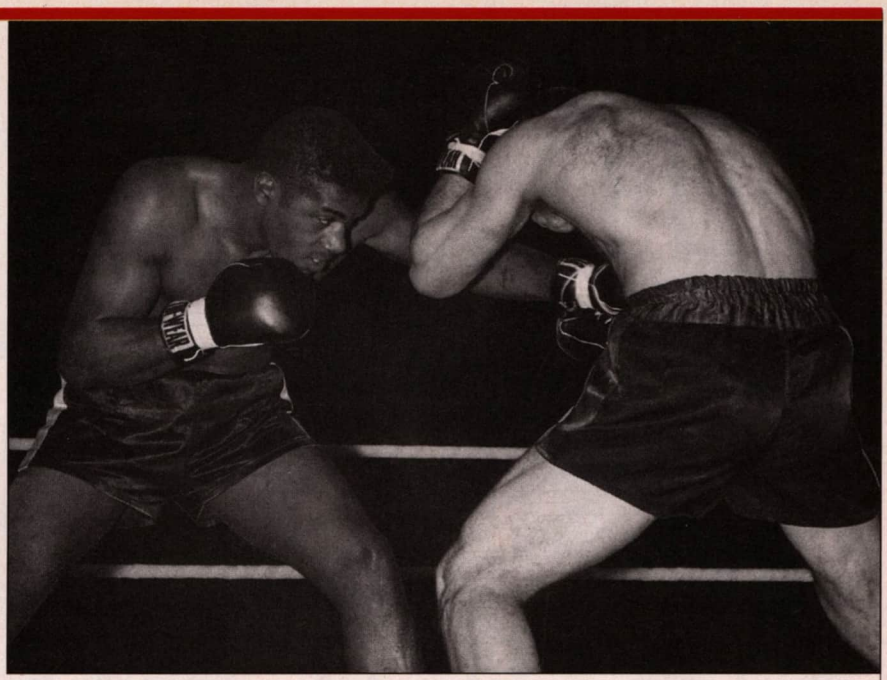
"What are (Liston's) chief shortcomings as a fighter? He lacks speed," says Clay. "He has no footwork and he won't keep up with me. Another thing. You will notice that big men who move slowly are inclined to think slowly. He doesn't use his brain fast enough to outgeneral me in the ring ... He will go in eight, and if he keeps talking that jive, he will go in five."

As it turned out, Clay also came close to calling the round—Liston failed to come out for the seventh.

"Is Liston Too Slow?" by Ted Carroll compares Liston to previous heavyweight champions Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Gene Tunney, Ezzard Charles, Primo Carnera, and Max Baer.

In comparing Liston's left hook to Dempsey's, Carroll writes: "Sonny delivers the blow like he does everything else, flatfooted. Dempsey was always on his toes."

When contrasting Liston with Tunney, Carroll notes that Tunney used his jab to set up a "foe for his accurate straight right," while Liston rarely follows up his jab with another punch.



Patterson digs a left into Amonti's stomach

"Patterson Plans No Fights in 'Antagonistic' USA" by Charley Parrish examines Floyd Patterson's first bout following his second kayo loss to Liston and the ex-champ's plans for the future.

"Well, Floyd Patterson, former heavyweight champion of the world, isn't quite a ham and egger," writes Parrish. "Not after his eighth-round knockout of Sante Amonti, king of all the heavies of Italy, Naples, Sardinia, Sicily, and Clabria."

There were approximately 11,700 fans on hand at Johanneshov Stadium in Stockholm, Sweden, for the fight and Patterson earned $60,000 for a relatively easy nights work.

When asked if he would be returning to the United States for his next fight, Patterson replied, "No, certainly not." Parrish theorizes that Patterson's attitude "conceivably traces to his feeling that American sports writers are antagonistic toward him."

True to his work, Patterson also fought his next fight in Sweden, and the one after that in Puerto Rico, before finally coming home to fight George Chuvalo at Madison Square Garden in February 1965.

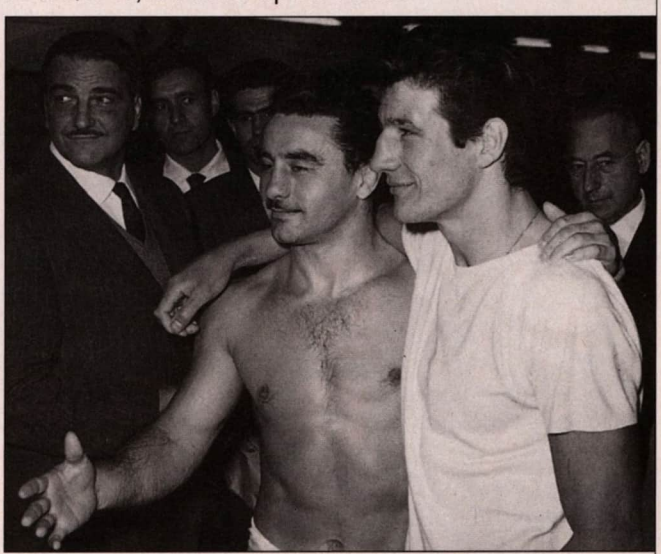
"Perkins Got A Scare" by Dale Dean is explained in the blurb that reads, "Not From Takahashi As An Opponent, But Takahashi As A Concussion Patient After KO In The Thirteenth."

The Perkins in question is junior welterweight champion Eddie Perkins, while his victim is Yoshinori Takahashi, who challenged for the title in front of 7,000 Japanese fans on Kuramae Sumo Auditorium in Tokyo.

Perkins dominated the fight and floored Takahashi twice in the 13th-round. After the fight was stopped, the unconscious challenger was taken to the hospital but released the following day.

"The fight played up the dangers of mismatching," writes Dean. "Takahashi is not now, nor has he been, one of the top-10 contenders among the 140 pounders."

"Papp Kayos Bull Fighter Folledo" is Parrish's account of European middleweight titleholder Laszlo Papp's defense against Spaniard Luis Folledo in Madrid. Despite the headline, Folledo was not a matador. He was, however, one of Spain's most popular and successful boxers, tallying a remarkable 121-6-1 (57) record before retiring in 1969. Still, he was no match for future Hall of Famer Papp, who stopped him in the eighth round in front of a full house of 15,000 at the Sports Palace. ■



Papp and Folledo look friendly at the weigh-in

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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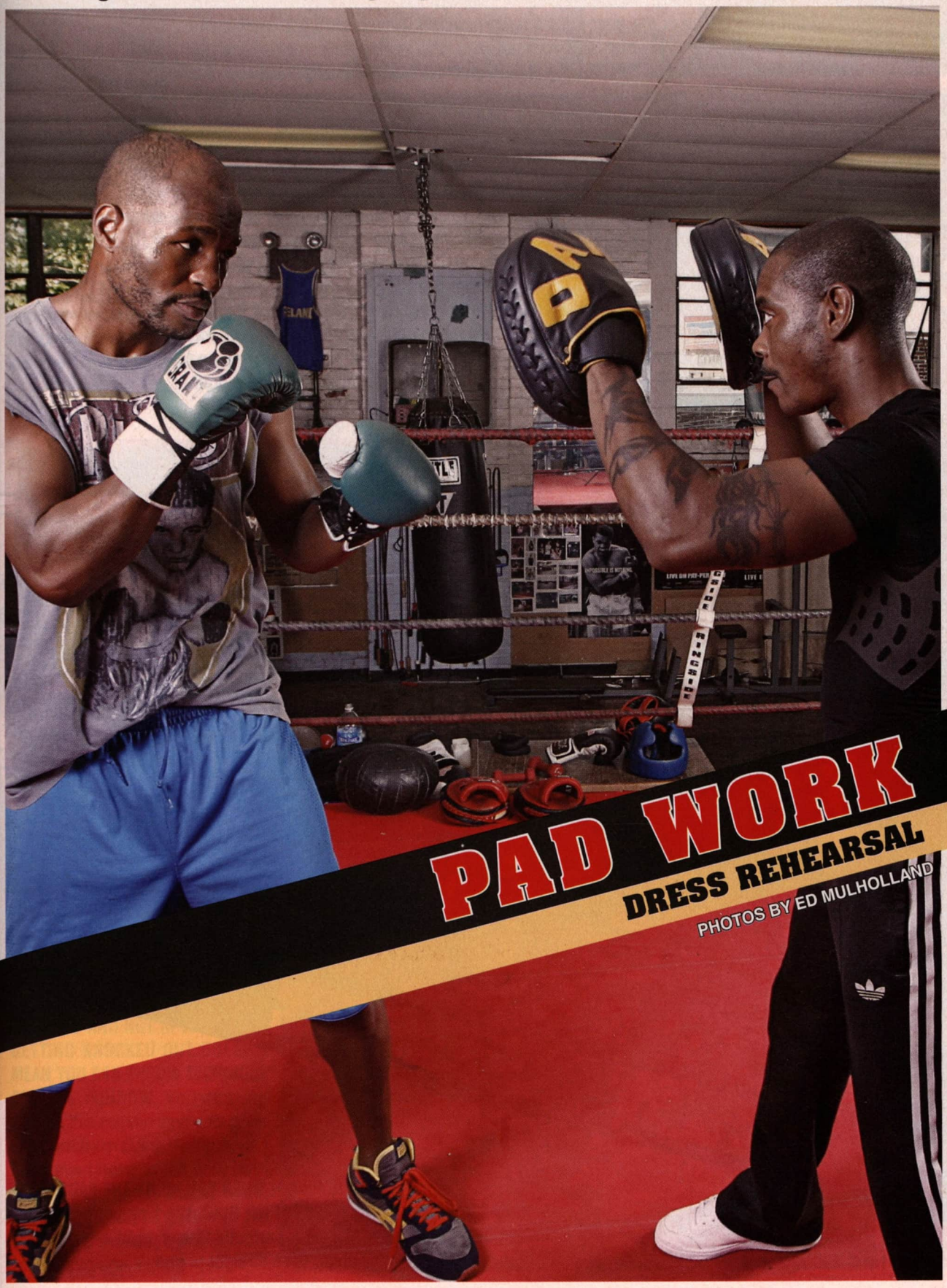
Perfect Execution

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



PAD WORK

DRESS REHEARSAL

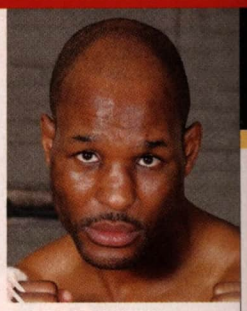
PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

Working the pads is one of the best drills a fighter can do. Hitting the pads works your speed, your timing, your rhythm, and your reflexes. You work your combinations. It's better for learning technique and keeping you honest than hitting the bag is because the bag doesn't hit back. The pads punch back because you've got a human being holding the pads and he's going to touch you and let you know what you're doing and not doing.

If I've got my hands down, Danny Davis is going to smack me, touch me here, touch me there. So the pads keep you conscious and keep you honest. And they teach you to use the ring and use your legs and keep your balance because you do pad work in the ring and you're always moving.

You're not supposed to hit the pads like you're hitting the heavy bag. Getting stronger isn't what the pads are for. They're for getting sharper, working your technique, and working your combinations. The pads are for keeping you on-point and sharp. To me, it's like rehearsing what needs to be done when the fight comes.

When you learn a new move or combination, you practice it on the pads before you try it in the ring. On the pads you and your trainer work it and work it until it becomes second nature, until you can do it without thinking about it. That's what the pads are for. The way you throw punches and move and duck and slip when you're working the pads is the way you'll do those things in a fight. Working the pads is a dress rehearsal. You should treat it that way.



BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)

WORK THAT TECHNIQUE

REMEMBER, THE WAY YOU PUNCH WHEN YOU WORK THE PADS IS THE WAY YOU PUNCH WHEN YOU'RE IN THE RING. Work on perfecting your punching technique. This is a perfectly thrown right cross: Hands up, chin down, on balance, eyes straight ahead.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

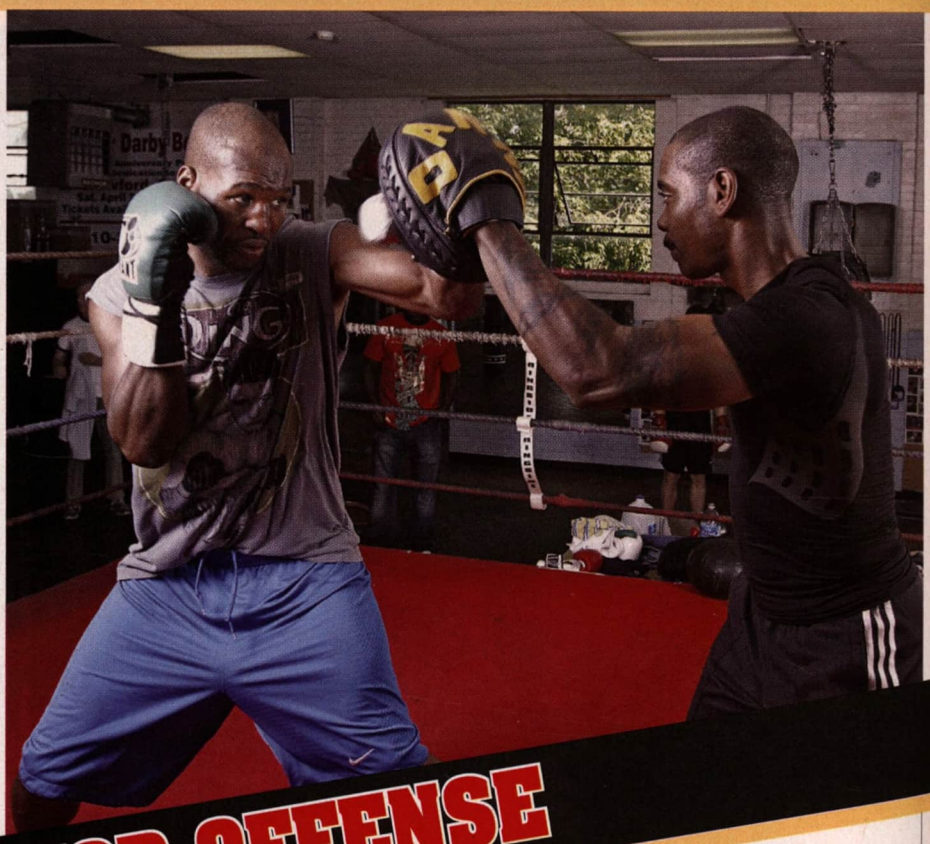
NOTICE HOW DANNY HAS TURNED THE PAD HERE TO CATCH MY LEFT HOOK? That's because we're communicating back and forth about what we're doing. When he holds the pad at that angle I know he wants the hook. Or I might tell him, "hook." Then he knows where and how to position the pad. A miscommunication here can result in some missing teeth or worse.

THE WRONG WAY

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE WORKING THE PADS AND NOT IN DANGER OF GETTING KNOCKED OUT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN THROW TECHNIQUE OUT THE WINDOW. You've been reading this column long enough to know what I'm doing wrong here. I don't even have to tell you, but I will: chin up, hands down, mouth wide open. Good thing Danny's not throwing punches; I would have walked into one.

THE RIGHT WAY

THAT'S BETTER. Hand ups, chin down, eyes straight ahead, on balance, whether you're shadow boxing, hitting the heavy bag, sparring, or working the pads. Technique, technique, technique.

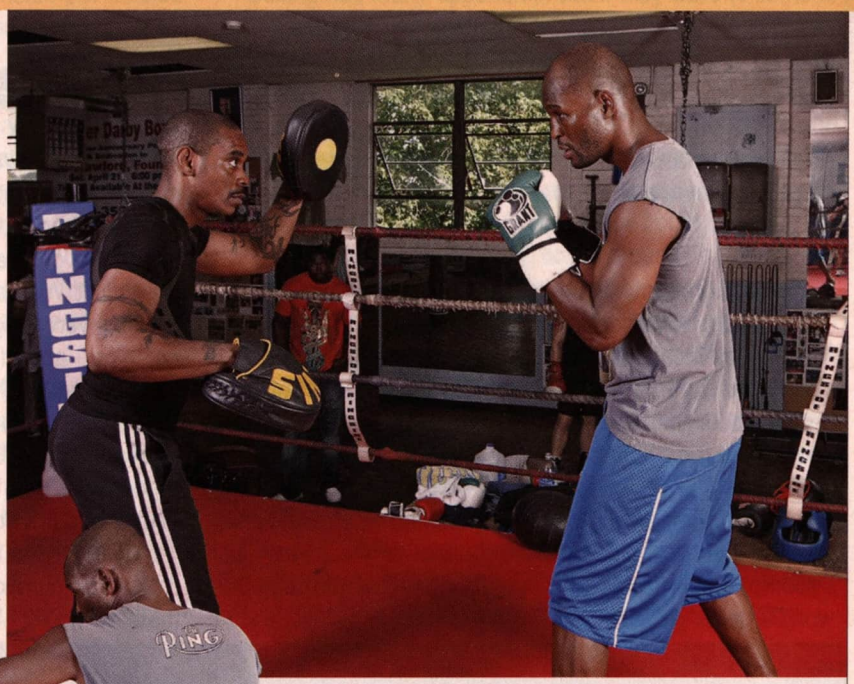


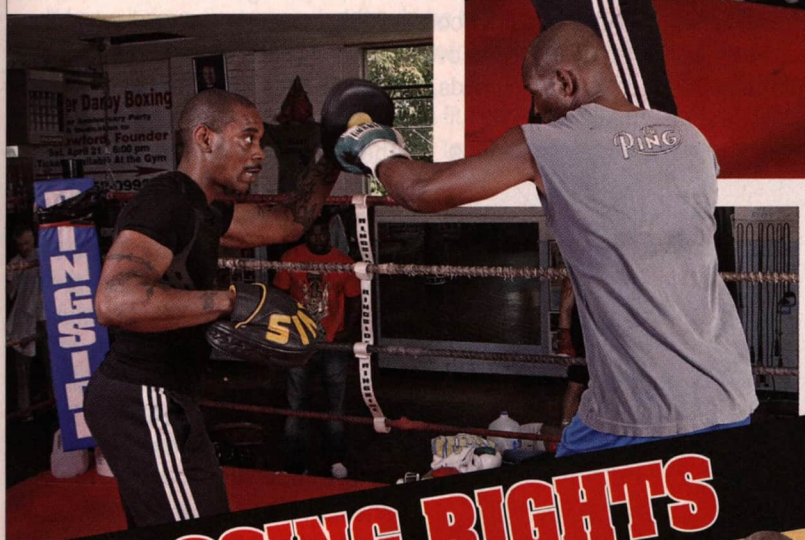
NOT JUST FOR OFFENSE

A GOOD TRAINER WILL "ATTACK" YOU SOMETIMES AND MAKE YOU WORK DEFENSE, which is why working the pads is the next best thing to sparring. You can work on perfecting your defensive moves without actually getting hit. No bloody noses or black eyes here; just good practice. But do it right.

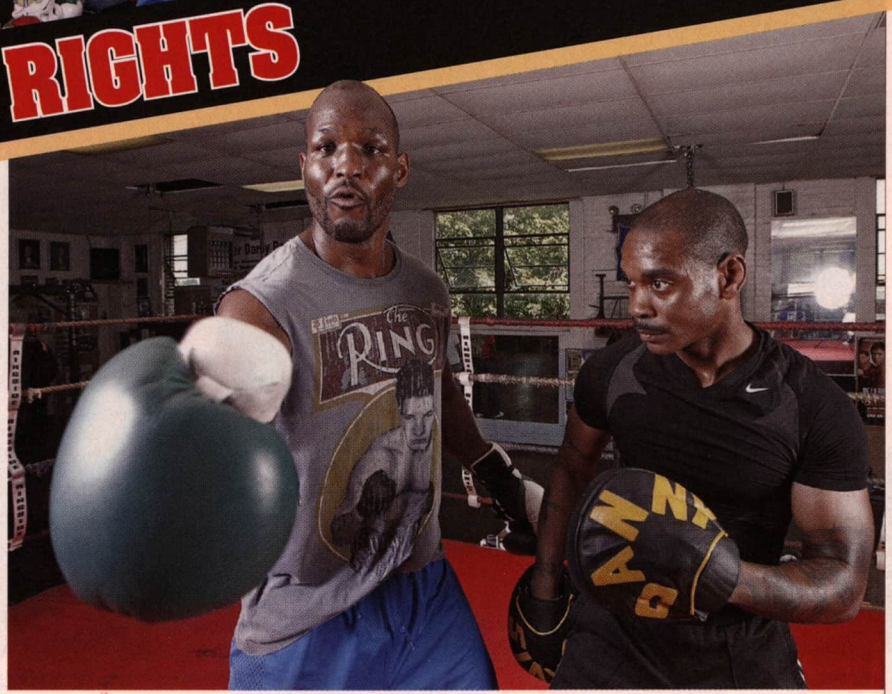
GET FAST

OPENINGS APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR IN A FRACTION OF A SECOND IN THE RING. You need quick reflexes to take advantage of them, and you get them by working the pads. A good pad trainer will show you a target for the jab, like Danny is here. It's your job to step in quick with that jab and nail it before it's gone (below).





BRAGGING RIGHTS



WHEN YOU'VE DONE GOOD WORK on the pads like I have, you can afford to do some bragging. Give me somebody!

By Michael Rivest

Boxing Moms Know Best

"It isn't what we don't know that gives us trouble. It's what we think we know that just ain't so."

—Will Rogers

Although humorist/social commentator Rogers wasn't talking specifically about boxing, his words ring true when it comes to uninitiated folks' opinions of boxing. You heard it all before: Fighters are violent, unintelligent brutes, and since boxing coaches are usually former boxers, enough said about them.

But parents of young amateur boxers arguably get the worst treatment of all: It's irresponsible, the way they encourage their kids to become little bullies. Why can't they just become soccer moms like everybody else and make this world a better place?

"Because we're 'boxer moms,'" said Carolyn Linen, as she stares at the ceiling in frustration.

"Look," added Allison Elsheikh, "none of us came here feeling that great about it in the beginning. Our kids were really drawn to it. We were all uncomfortable at the thought of punching—the very thing we've been telling our kids their whole lives *not* to do—and all of a sudden we're applauding it."

Linen and Elsheikh are two of six women at upstate New York's Schenectady Youth Boxing (SYB) gym who call themselves the "SYB Boxer Moms." The gym is headed by coach Vince Kittle, who's been volunteering his services since the gym opened its doors in 2003.

"What won us over, each of us," said Elsheikh, "is the effect it's had on our kids. We see it. It's undeniable and it's given them so much."

PHOTO BY MICHAEL RIVEST

Boxing moms (clockwise from the top): Esha Selim, Carolyn Linen, Alison Elsheikh, Barbara Gesek, Rae Lynch, and Peggy Dorn

The SYB Boxer Moms sit together at ringside every night, while their kids train, and regularly pile into their cars to go to fights, whether or not their child is competing. "We're family," said Linen. "We cheer for each other's kids as much as we do for our own."

Linen's 15-year-old son, Ben, has just started to have actual bouts. She knows the sting of judgment and gets it at work all the time.

"I hear, 'What's the matter with you? He could get hurt.'"

Same with Rae Lynch whose 12-year-old daughter, Tatiana, is about to have her first bout. "Even my family thinks I'm wrong to do this," Lynch said. "It's made worse, I think, by the fact that Tatiana is not just a girl, but a pretty girl."

Elsheikh and Esha Selim get disapproval from two directions. As Muslims, they're frowned upon by many people in general, but also by some Muslims who interpret the *Qur'an* as prohibiting striking in the face even in sport. And as for young Muslim *girls* boxing, forget it. Many Muslims consider that *haraam*—forbidden.

"My son, Ali (age 12), talks about boxing so much that my daughter wants to do it too, and I'm going to let her," said Elsheikh.

What's so special about amateur boxing that moms would want to not only bear the weight of their own fears, but also endure such disapproval?

"No other sport has done so much for our kids," said Lynch. Heads nod in unison. "Boxing has made our kids more disciplined, more focused, not just inside but outside the ring, more self-confident, and more respectful of themselves and others."

C'mon, boxing does this?

"I wouldn't have believed it in the beginning," said Selim, "but it's true. There's something very human about it. Kids know that the world is so much bigger and stronger than they are. They feel vulnerable. Boxing is the perfect way for them to cope with those feelings."

"Maybe it's the individual nature of boxing and the need to deal with fear in the ring. It gives them a sense of control," added Elsheikh, "and that's good."

But now that their kids have learned to throw straight punches, are they worried they might get a call from the school principal letting them know that their son or daughter has been doing, you know, "lab work" on the noses of classmates?

"I know it sounds strange, but they'd be the last kids to do that," said Linen, to the noticeable agreement of the other five moms. "That would never happen."

"They know Coach Kittle would have a fit," added Lynch.

"It would go against everything he's taught them about respect for themselves and others," said Selim.

You won't find too many youth-serving organizations supporting what boxer moms have learned is true. "Boxing is good for kids" is about the last thing the youth development establishment, let alone pediatricians, want to go on record as saying.

The implications are unsettling. If "hitting" can sometimes be good, they reason, wouldn't admitting it open Pandora's Box in schoolyards all over the country? It's easier to say it's never okay. And if "hitting" can sometimes be safe, well, the doctor who would admit that is taking a chance. You can practically see salivating lawyers lining up.

Yet the National Safety Council said back in 1996 that amateur boxing ranks far behind other contact sports (23rd) in injuries. No amateur sport polices itself so rigidly on matters of safety than does amateur boxing, so according to the NSC, soccer moms have more to fear than do boxer moms.

Still, we seem to prefer leaving youth boxing at arm's length, unfunded and safely tucked away behind sad stereotypes. But SYB Boxer Moms, along with moms and dads of amateur boxers everywhere, don't need anyone to tell them what they have witnessed in the lives of their children.

"I still can't bring myself to watch Ben in the ring," said Linen, laughing. "I can only watch him through the viewfinder in my camera. But I'll be there every night. It's all so worth it."

Meet Coach Kittle

Boxing has many opponents. But if they were to come to Schenectady Youth Boxing, it would hit "delete" to so many wrong ideas they have and replace what they think they know with the truth.

They'd see 51-year-old Vince Kittle, a former champion amateur boxer, still in his tie from his day job as a Security Officer at an Albany, New York, middle-school. Every day he makes the half-hour drive to Schenectady Youth Boxing.

"I'm the best-dressed boxing coach around," he joked.

There's no time to change. There are always kids waiting at the door, looking at Vince and his older amateur boxers with admiration and respect, something that's missing from the faces of too many youth today.

"They come here by bike, bus, jogging, sometimes a parent brings them. But they get here." And what they receive is a lesson in discipline, focus, and the power of being involved in something larger than themselves.

"There's something spiritual about boxing, and the kids sense it; they're looking for it." Kittle said. It's a mystery about boxing gyms that would amaze those who think they know.

Louie Byrd Wins In Russia

Denver, Colorado, flyweight Louie Byrd brought home a gold medal with a 9-6 victory over France's Jeremy Veccu in championship round action at the 2009 World Cup of Petroleum Countries in Khanty-Mansisysk, Russia. Byrd's gold was the only U.S. tournament medal.

In addition to winning the tournament, Byrd was named the boxer with the Best Ring Tactics in the tournament. He is the reigning flyweight champion in the United States and has eyes on the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England. ■

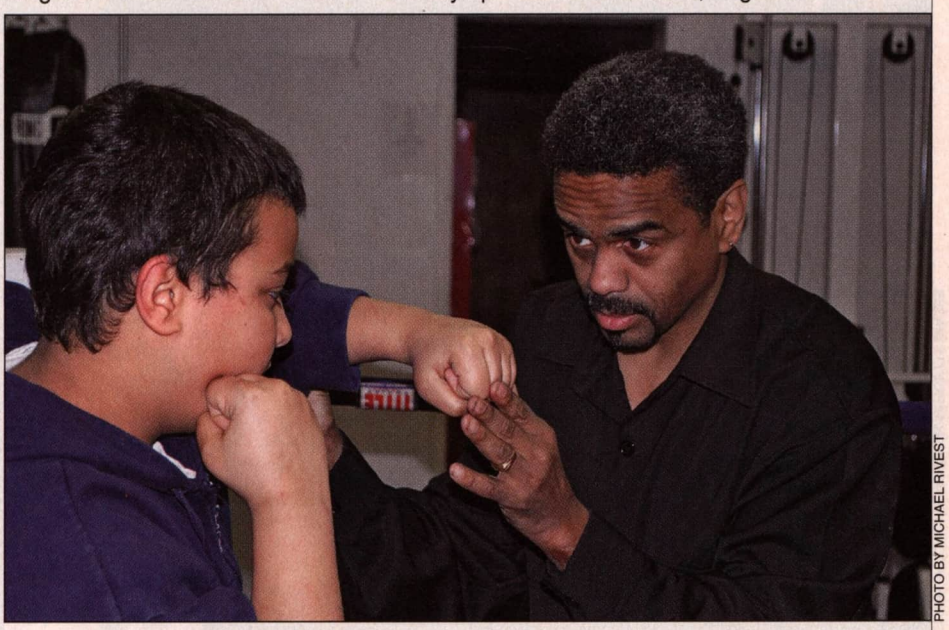


PHOTO BY MICHAEL RIVEST

Coach Kittle teaches Ali Elsheikh the left hook

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

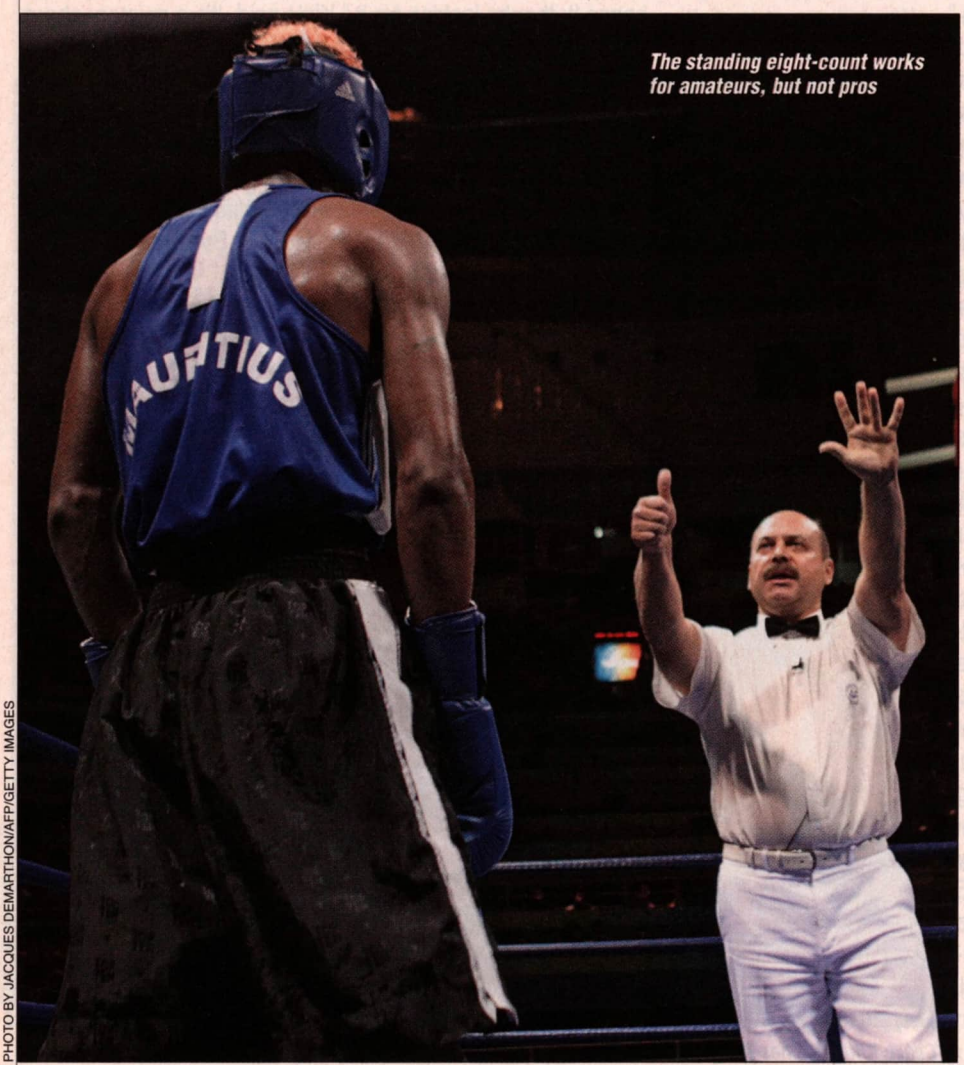
The Standing Eight-Count

During the November 2009 fight between Francisco Rodriguez and Teon Kennedy at Philadelphia's Blue Horizon, Rodriguez was wobbled twice in the first round. He received a mandatory eight count from referee Benjy Esteves Jr. because the ropes braced him from hitting the canvas. When Rodriguez died as a result of ring injuries, many misinterpreted Esteves' count as a standing eight and attempted to use that as a reason the fight ended so tragically.

This raised the need to better understand terminology, explore why standing eights are no longer allowed in professional boxing, and consider if they once served a useful purpose.

Standing eight-counts were originally instituted to give an overwhelmed boxer a few seconds to regain his composure and enable the referee to make an assessment on a fighter's ability to continue. The Association of Boxing Commissions abolished them in 1998, although many jurisdictions had stopped using the standing eight prior to that.

"Commissions and the boxing public need to understand boxing nomenclature," said Larry Hazzard, former New Jersey Athletic Control Board Commissioner. "I can't tell you how often the definitions are misunderstood, especially by commentators. A knockdown occurs when any part of a fighter's body (other than the soles of his feet) touches the canvas as a result of a legal punch. However, it is also a legal knockdown if the fighter is supported solely by the ropes. In the Rodriguez fight, that was a legal knockdown and the ref gave a mandatory eight."



The standing eight-count works for amateurs, but not pros

PHOTO BY JACQUES DEMARTHON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hazzard, who currently serves as Personal Assistant to the President of the International Boxing Federation and Chairman of the Officials Committee, notes he abolished the standing eight in New Jersey in 1986 or '87, soon after he became a commissioner.

"I didn't like it when I was a ref. It led to many controversies," said Hazzard. "It did give the referee a few extra uninterrupted seconds to assess a fighter without the distractions of the bell or a knockdown. But it lacked an element of fairness, as the opponent didn't always get the same benefit if he was also rocked. There is nothing more important than for a referee to be consistent in the ring."

Former Nevada commissioner and chief ringside physician Flip Homansky noted, "A standing eight is like a plane running out

of fuel and about to crash. The ref giving a standing eight is like putting a little more fuel in the plane—not enough to get home safely but enough so that when the plane goes down, the crash and burn is worse.

"Let me get this right. I am going to give someone eight seconds to clear their head from a concussion? We give a boxer five minutes to get over a nut shot, but expect their cranium to be okay in eight seconds?"

Pennsylvania Executive Director Greg Sirb agrees: "I was never in favor of the standing eight," said Sirb. "The bottom line is if you cannot protect yourself, then the fight should be over. When I looked at this from a statistical study, 83 percent of the boxers that received a standing eight were later stopped in that round or a later round."

Well-known referee Steve Smoger has worked hundreds of U.S. and international fights. He believes that the standing eight had its merits. "For me, it was an excellent assessment tool if properly utilized," said Smoger. "I want to have every tool available to avoid a quick stoppage and give a fighter every opportunity to continue."

Smoger does admit that it was overused or improperly used at times.

"The naysayers will say that a standing eight can take the advantage away from the aggressor, but I never saw a fighter regain enough composure to come back and win."

None of the boxing officials interviewed by THE RING were able to recall instances where the standing eight was used in a specific bout. Still, it remains a staple in amateur boxing and for good reason.

Amateur fights don't typically hinge on knockdowns or knockouts. The standing eight is a preventative measure. If the amateur athlete receives a standing eight, the referee can properly assess the boxer's alertness and focus before he gets hurt, as opposed to professional boxing where it was used after the boxer was hurt.

In my mind, a professional boxer is either able to continue or he is not. A skilled referee must know what to look for that indicates a fighter should not absorb further punishment and formulate a split-second decision. Giving the boxer extra time to regain his composure could be just enough time to subject him to unnecessary punishment that still doesn't alter the outcome.

Therefore, although the standing eight is useful in an amateur setting, few professional referees are talented enough to use it wisely. It was too often a crutch for an official who couldn't pull the trigger and might have predisposed athletes to irreparable harm.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Building muscles the old-fashioned way

Blood Doping Controversy

While waiting to see if Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather agreed to fight, both sides met with a judicial mediator in an effort to settle their differences. Apparently, each offered some compromise regarding drug testing. But when it comes to performance-enhancing drugs, there is little room to negotiate.

I find it admirable that the Mayweather camp wants thorough random blood and urine tests, but their willingness to accept no blood tests closer than 14 days before the bout is ludicrous.

Moreover, the tests were to exclude human growth hormone (HGH). In that case, the examinations might as well not be done at all!

Blood testing is the sole way to identify blood doping or HGH. A boxer could stop the substances 14 days out, yet still reap the benefits and test negative. In fact, they could stop some drugs hours before and escape detection.

If Mayweather wants to fight a clean opponent, then do the right thing and don't compromise on random unannounced blood testing up until the fight with all future opponents. Otherwise, both athletes should accept these absurd testing compromises, make the fight, and let's see who wins. Then, we can all further denigrate a sport we love and argue whether or not the current status quo of inadequate drug testing in boxing is to blame for the result. ■

By Jim Bagg

A Quack In The Facade

You might think there are no winners to come out of this Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather mess. But you would be wrong, because there is one clear winner: The Baggmeister.

As usual, the Baggenius was ahead of the curve. As usual, he saw the future coming back when all the common humanoids were too busy trying to figure out the present. As usual, Baggy The Greek proved himself the Tiger Woods of prognosticators (that is to say, the best at what he does professionally … and not so good at the wife-management thing).

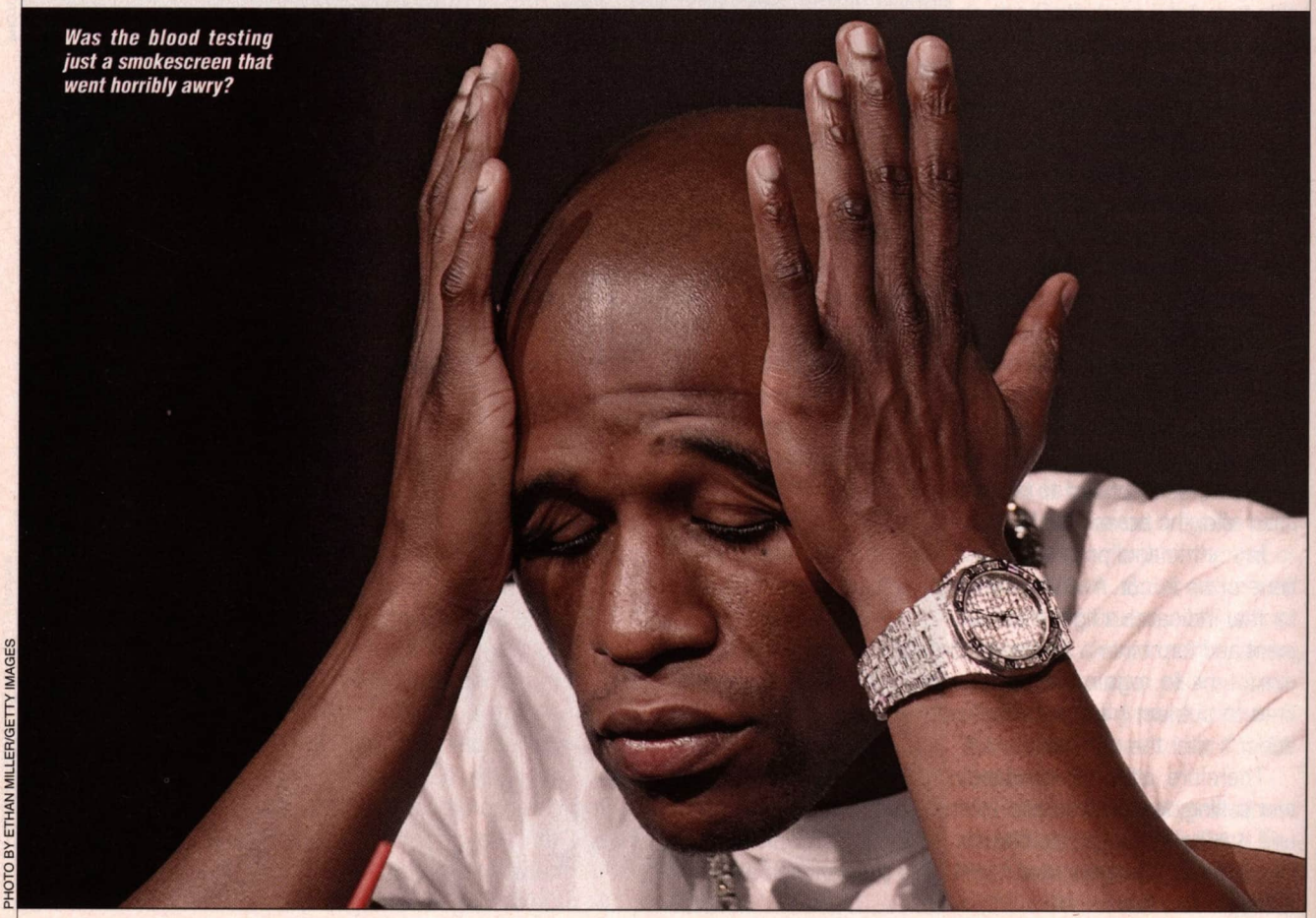
Allow Lord Baggtimore to quote himself from a column written back in May of last year, immediately after Pacquiao disposed of Ricky Hatton in approximately the time it takes for "The Hitman" to chug a pint:

"The Baggweiser says [Pacquiao vs. Mayweather talk is] a waste of breath. A year ago, Mayweather might have viewed Pacquiao as undersized and easy pickings. But during Mayweather's extended vacation from the sport, Pac-Man emerged as a new threat for Floyd to avoid.

" … On the inside, [Mayweather] questions himself sometimes. That's why he's danced around his most dangerous possible opponents in recent years. And that's why, about 10 hours before Pacquiao fought Hatton, Mayweather formally announced his fight with [Juan Manuel] Marquez … If Floyd really wanted a piece of Pacquiao, he could have waited one more day to finalize his comeback fight.

" … Mayweather has made a handsome living the last six years ducking fighters like Pacquiao, and there's no reason to believe he suddenly wants to start testing himself again now … Pacquiao made the mistake of obliterating Hatton and [Oscar] De La Hoya, and the Bagg Lebowski suspects he obliterated his chances of luring Mayweather into the ring in the process."

Everybody has their own view on this blood-testing controversy that supposedly was what prevented Pacquiao vs.



Was the blood testing just a smokescreen that went horribly awry?

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Maybe Pacquiao simply looked too good hammering Cotto

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather from being signed for March 13, but what the Baggadillo felt last May hasn't changed one bit in the intervening months. Mayweather's testing demands were a pure smokescreen. Li'l Floyd noticed how his dad's steroid accusations rankled Pacquiao, and he knew full well that by asking for additional testing—testing that the Nevada commission has never asked any fighter to subject himself to and testing that Mayweather has never asked any prior opponent to undergo—he would get some steam coming out of Pac-Man's ears. Mayweather figured that would be the deal breaker right there and he'd be able to walk away with his precious undefeated record still intact while being able to claim Pacquiao walked away from the fight.

But then Team Pacquiao came into mediation in January willing to compromise. Pacquiao wanted a 30-day testing window. Mayweather wanted 14. Pacquiao said 24. If Mayweather wanted the fight, he would have said 18. And on it would have gone until they settled on a 21-day window and then everybody could have made enough money to buy a fleet of Rolls Royces and all the guns they could fit into them. But instead Mayweather, down to only two choices—make the fight or make it painfully obvious that he never wanted the fight—stopped negotiating. And like that, the fight was off.

But you already knew all of that. What you don't know about is the fact that Mayweather is working on a soon-to-be-released book, entitled *As Scared As I Wanna Be: Essays And Meditations On The Fine Art Of Ducking*. Thanks to his various insider contacts in the publishing industry, the Baggtastic gained advance access to the book, and he's gotta tell you, it's quite an eye-opener.

Here is "Money May's Seven-Step Foolproof Plan" revealed therein for all those looking to duck fights:

1. Convince yourself that "not losing" is the same as "winning." (Writes Floyd: "Everything begins with getting yourself in the proper state of mind to duck.")

2. Insist to the public that money doesn't matter to you. ("That way, you seem to be a man of principle," Mayweather writes. "Plus you have a built-in excuse to turn down an $8-million offer to face Antonio Margarito. Win-win.")

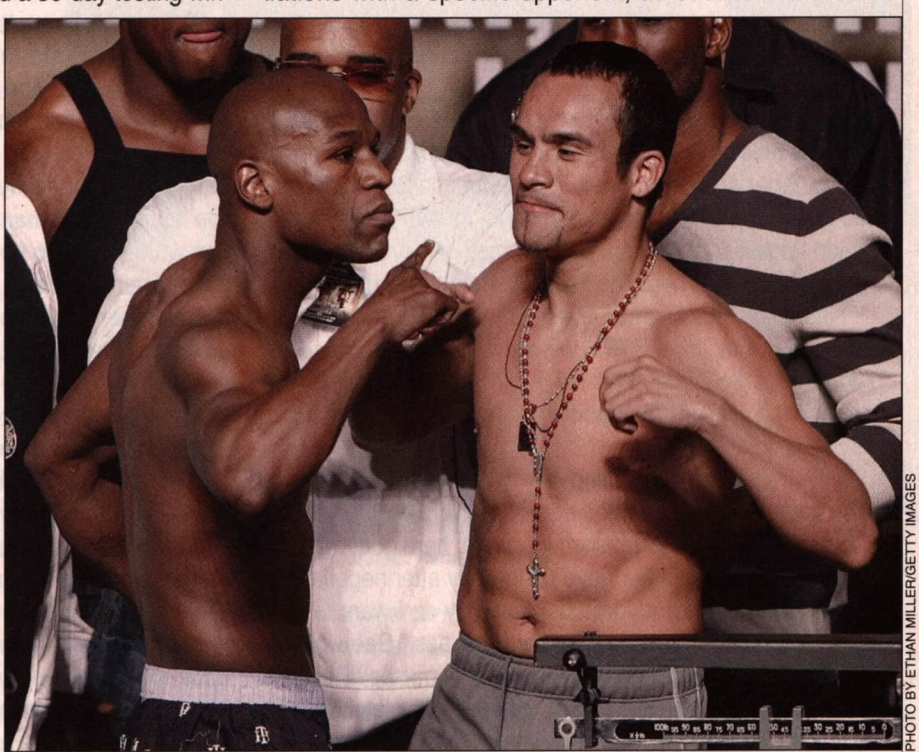
3. Confuse the public by nicknaming yourself "Money." ("The more confused they are, the less likely they are to see what's really going on," *As Scared As I Wanna Be* explains.)

4. Don't let the fact that a guy lost his last fight discourage you. (This is known in the book as "The Judah Clause.")

5. Do let yourself be discouraged by guys who can box and punch and are coming off spectacular performances. (Known by several names: "The Tszyu Clause," "The Margarito Clause," and now "The Pacquiao Clause.")

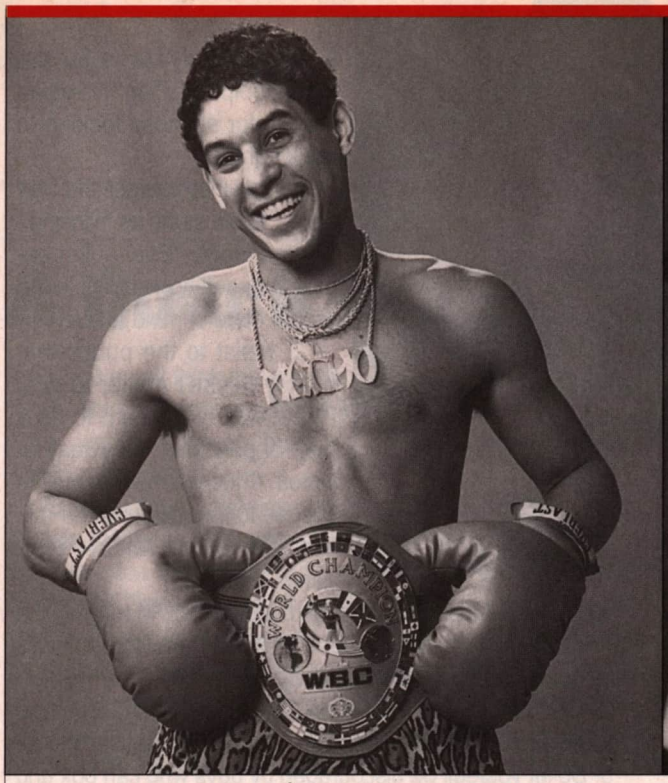
6. If you must fight a quality opponent, make sure that you have a weight advantage, even if it means lying to everyone about the weight you intend to make ("The Marquez Clause").

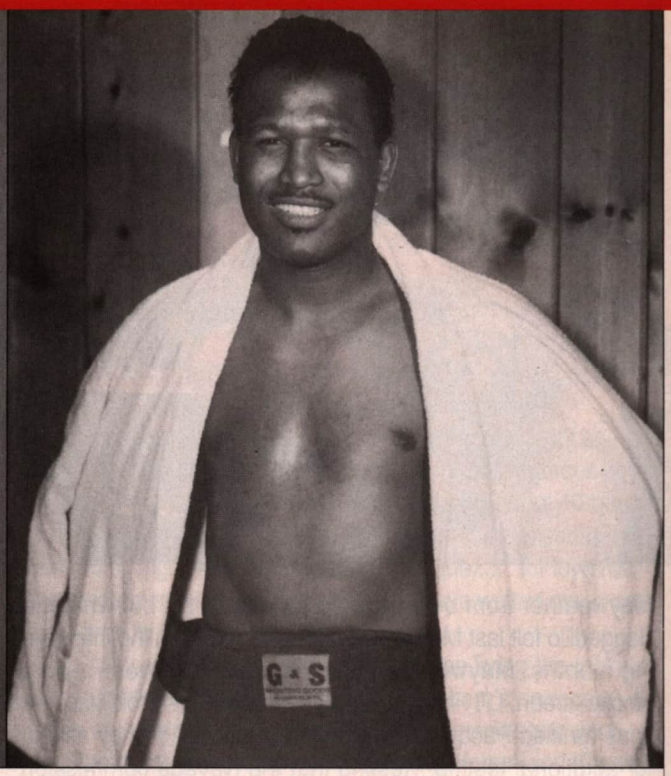
7. If you can't figure out a way around entering into negotiations with a specific opponent, at least submarine the



Floyd invokes "The Marquez Clause" at weigh-in

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES





Is Mayweather more like Camacho than Robinson?

negotiations by finding out that opponent's soft spots and attacking them.

The Baggareeno will let Pacquiao's adviser, Michael Koncz, make himself momentarily useful by explaining how Step Number Seven came into play recently:

"After Manny fought [Erik] Morales [the first time, in 2005], he attributed the loss to the late blood test he took and I think they came across that," Koncz said of Team Mayweather after the mediation attempts failed. "They initially wanted to use this as a way to get under Manny's skin … but it was also a way he could bow out of the fight."

Koncz called the drug-testing issue "a facade." That viewpoint was reiterated by others in the Pacquiao camp.

"[Manager Al] Haymon and [promoter Richard] Schaefer tried to convince Floyd [to take the fight for two days] and he wouldn't agree to it," Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum claimed. "He didn't want the fight. He never wanted the fight."

"I just think he's scared," Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach told Brian Kenny in an ESPN interview. "He has a chance of losing for the first time in his life and he doesn't want that to happen, and it's very disappointing because the whole world wants this fight."

Is the Baggnasty presenting only one side of the story with these quotes? You're damned right he is.

But if it's balanced journalism you want, here goes with the kind of quote Mayweather gave us the day after negotiations officially died: "First and foremost, not only do I want to fight Manny Pacquiao, I want to whip his punk ass." See why the Baggamaniac didn't include any Mayweather quotes? Because they say nothing of substance and they ring completely hollow. His mantra is talk tough, and negotiate *so* tough that you aren't really negotiating.

The sad part is that Mayweather might have been able to beat Pacquiao. "Money" is a superbly skilled boxer, and although the Baggnificence would have made the Filipino a slight favorite, you certainly could have envisioned Mayweather prevailing and scoring that career-defining win that allows him to argue that, indeed, he is this generation's Sugar Ray Robinson. (Just replace the pink Caddy with a Segway and the midget court jester with Leonard Ellerbe.)

But for all of his talent, Mayweather is so afraid to lose that he won't step into the ring unless he views himself as a 10-to-1 favorite. The fact that he *can* beat Pacquiao isn't enough. He needed to know he *will* beat Pacquiao, and after seeing what Pac-Man did to De La Hoya (whom Mayweather barely beat) and to Hatton (who was infinitely more competitive against Floyd than he was against Pacquiao), not to mention what he did to poor Cotto (whom Mayweather wouldn't get near unless Vince McMahon was scripting the outcome), Mayweather could no longer guarantee himself a victory. It started to feel to him like a "maybe." And the name is "Mayweather," not "Maybe-weather."

Sorry, Floyd, but you aren't this generation's Sugar Ray Robinson. You're more like this generation's Hector "Macho" Camacho—a waste of talent who came to recognize his own mortality mid-career and was never the same.

Of course, the Baggagascar knew this and said so many months ago. But if there was any doubt in the mind of others, Mayweather removed it this winter.

Reader Adam Wiswell of Los Angeles sent the Baggenbrau an e-mail in January asking, "Where do you rank Floyd Mayweather defensively in relation to Willie Pep and the other all-time greats?" The answer: Pep was better at blocking, slipping, and parrying. Mayweather is better at ducking.

The Monthly Mailbagg

From Vitali Klitschko to Joe Mesi to Manny Pacquiao, we've seen quite a few instances recently of boxers dabbling in politics. In that spirit, Rod Baggojevich presents a Mailbagg heavy with political rambling and light on boxing talk:

Dear Bagg'a hot air (alias Punditwannabe):

I enjoyed your latest column until I came to your denunciation of the Democrat National Convention as a pack of dictator-appeasers who spend money they just printed on social programs guaranteed to make good situations bad and bad situations worse.

Oh, did I misquote you? See how complicated it all gets? Let's make a deal. You write about boxing and I won't write you any more letters—I'll just sit back and enjoy your otherwise excellent columns.

Nelson L. Dawson
Louisville, KY

Nelson,

You Republicans—you're so cute when you try to put words together and form sentences. For the record, Martin Van Baggen isn't a Democrat, so you can mock the Dems all you want. A man like the Bagginator can't be confined to a single political party. So he mixes a little Democrat, a splash of Libertarian, a pinch of Green, and, just for a little old-school flavor, a whiff of Whig.

Anyway, just for the record and for those readers who missed it, here's the *actual* brief political statement that the Baggscraper made in the February issue: " ... Republican national conventions where war-mongers congratulate each other for spending money we don't have in search of weapons that don't exist ... "

The Baggasaurus isn't quite sure what you intentionally misquoting him proves. What he does know is this: Don King stumped for the Republicans in 2000 and 2004, then he stumped for the Democrats in 2008. So neither party is completely innocent.

The only party that always gets it right is the Bagg Party, which runs on a platform of unlimited booze, legal prostitution, and ... well, once you have unlimited booze and legal prostitution, does anything else really matter?

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Carson Jones, who despite having two last names and no first name, exposed the manufactured record of Tyrone Brunson as being more about the knockout-ees than the knockout-er. Brunson came into the December *ShoBox* fight listed at 21-0-1 (20), including 19 straight first-round kayos to begin his career. The record-setting streak was really just a testament to what irresponsible matchmaking can do, and once it ended (with a six-round draw against journeyman Antonio Soriano), the process of fighting marginally better opposition and finding out if Brunson was actually any good began.

Jones, at 23-7-1 (14), represented a huge step up, and we found out that, no, Brunson isn't all that good.

But let's not take too much credit away from our Stingray recipient, who fought well and whacked Brunson out of there in three rounds. A right hand in the third sent Brunson to the canvas and started his demise. Jones attacked, Brunson couldn't get out of the way, and referee Dr. James Jen-Kin let it go as long as he could before he had no choice but to call a halt.

PHOTO BY DWIGHT MCCANN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Jones handed Brunson his first loss and earned a Stingray

"Everybody thinks that just because I have seven losses that I'm just coming in as an opponent," Jones said after the win. "But that's not me. I have seven losses because I had bad management, but now I have a great manager and promoter who are able to take care of me."

Let's just hope "taking care of him" doesn't mean matching him with the guys Brunson faced for his first 19 fights. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Left Or Right?

I saw a picture of Manny Pacquiao signing an autograph with his right hand in a picture in the February 2010 issue of THE RING. However, everybody knows that Manny Pacquiao is a southpaw boxer. But is he a naturally right-handed boxer who fights as a southpaw much like Michael Moorer, Chad Dawson, and Juan Urango or even the fictitious Rocky Balboa, or is he a natural lefty who fights as an orthodox fighter like Miguel Cotto?

NICK WENTZELL
Long Beach, MS

Editor's note: Michael Koncz, chief advisor for Manny Pacquiao, said Manny signs many autographs—sometimes over one or two hundred in a single day. Manny signs with his left hand. If the left hand tires, he switches and signs with his right hand.

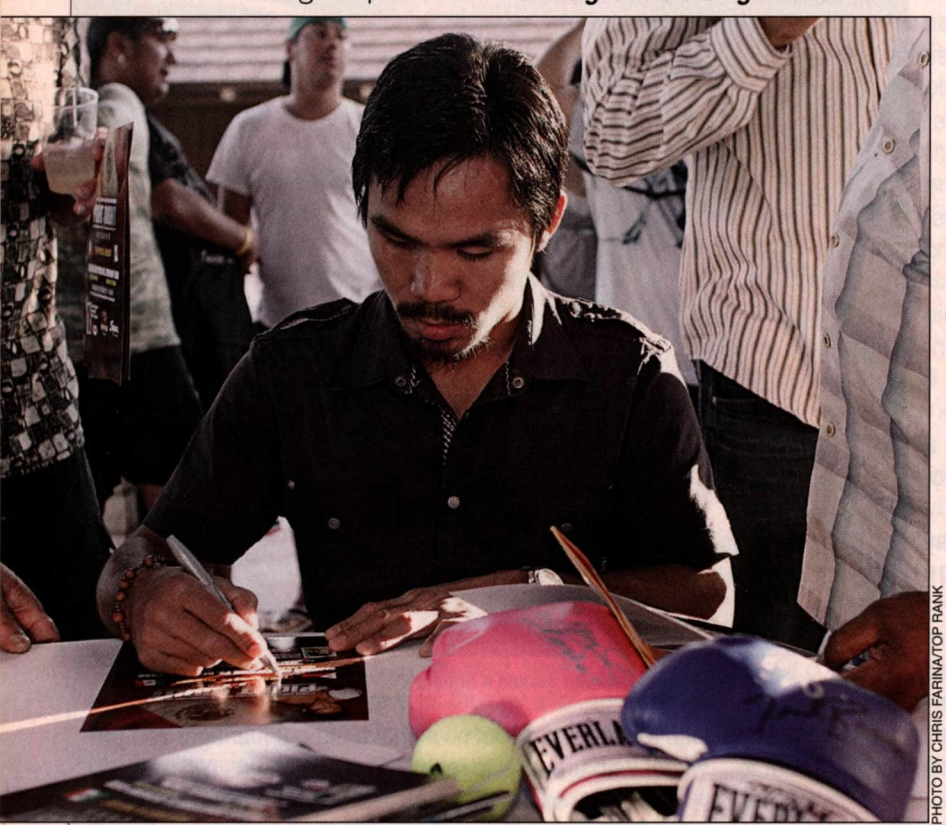


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Why is southpaw Manny Pacquiao signing autographs with his right hand? That's what reader Nick Wentzell wants to know, so we reached out to Top Rank publicist Lee Samuel, who provided an answer from Pac-Man's adviser, Michael Koncz.

Is Oscar No Longer Cover Worthy?

Oscar De La Hoya's time is over. There are many active boxers around the world who deserve to be on the cover. One more issue of THE RING with De La Hoya on its cover and I will cancel my subscription. On the other hand, the interview was very interesting.

PEDRO ZAYAS
Aibonito, PR

Mayweather No Robinson

In the February issue, Nigel Collins wrote that Mayweather-Pacquiao promised to be a stinker. Well, that turned out to be correct because the fight is not even happening. Sugar Ray Robinson would have fought Pacquiao, and win or lose, fought him again in three weeks. Then he would have fought Shane Mosley, Andre Berto, Joshua Clottey, and every other good welterweight out there. I don't know what's up with Floyd, but he should take the word "Money" out of his name.

SHANNON SMITH
Milton, PA

Mayweather No All-Time Great

I must take issue with Gavin Evans' contribution to the February 2010 issue ("Floyd Mayweather vs. Ten All-Time Welterweight Greats"). How could Floyd Mayweather defeat six of the 10 greatest welterweights of all-time when he hasn't beaten even one top welterweight of his own time?

Remember, Benny "Kid" Paret paid with his life for questioning Emile Griffith's sexuality. Mayweather suffers far worse taunts, yet his response is to talk tough and fight safe. What a hollow champion. Even so, Evans says Mayweather would take a unanimous decision over Griffith! Mayweather hasn't tested himself against anyone his own age, his own size, or his own skill level.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Of the nine letters from readers published in this issue, four were at least partially about Floyd Mayweather. None of them were particularly positive.

Moreover, lately he's taken to picking on old guys like Oscar De La Hoya and little guys such as Ricky Hatton and Juan Manuel Marquez. Shame on Mayweather and those who count him as an all-time "great" based on such a paper-thin resume.

JOSH FENNELL
Washington, DC

Cancellation Reaction

As a 73-year-old, lifetime boxing fan, I was overjoyed to see the Pacquiao-Mayweather bout canceled. Watching Mayweather fight is like watching a man trying to catch a chicken. He does not fight; he plays tag. Oscar De La Hoya should have won their encounter by default. Not since Jimmy Young kept ducking outside the ropes when he fought Muhammad Ali have I witnessed a sorrier performance by anyone.

Regardless of the hype, Mayweather does not even belong in the same stadium as Manny, let alone the same ring. You are too kind when you describe his style as overly cautious.

DON McMONIGAL
Surry, VA

I am sure I won't be the only one writing to you this month in relation to the proposed superfight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather, but I just wanted to say how disgusted and yet bemused I am at why this fight is not going ahead. I have been following the developments of the negotiations online for a few weeks now, thinking that all the small details would be ironed out in order for both parties to make a sizeable fortune (especially given "Money's" money problems). But now that it has been announced that the fight is officially off, I, along with a million others want to know why. Though I'm sure the answer to this question will only raise a thousand more.

NATHAN SHAW
Belfast, Northern Ireland

Editor's note: See David Mayo's in-depth analysis ("The Death Of A Superfight") on page 28

Danger Zone

Both the American Association for the Improvement of Boxing and The Jerry Quarry Foundation for Pugilistica Dementia strongly support safety in professional boxing. Both organizations have always opposed any and all boxing commissions who license fighters who have sustained a cerebral hemorrhage. As neurologist Dr. Margaret Goodman writes in the December 2009 issue of THE RING ("Head Case'), cerebral hemorrhage remains the leading cause of boxing-related deaths. Both of these organizations also believe that the fighters who sustain a career-ending head injury should be provided with some type of assistance to transition into another career.

GEORGE OTTO
georgeotto@att.net

Bernstein's The Best

I have been watching Al Bernstein since his days on ESPN, where he paired up with Barry Tompkins, which is in my opinion the best ringside commentating team of the last 25 years. Bernstein is always unbiased, enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable. You know that he loves the sport and you can hear it in his voice as he calls fights. He's one of the guys that makes watching boxing fun. Great work, Al.

JEREMY GUERRIERI
Concord, OH

Danny's Turn

Thanks for the master class in boxing technique THE RING provides readers every month courtesy of "Perfect Execution" by the legendary Bernard Hopkins. But I have one small gripe: Let our man Danny Davis sneak one in from time to time. For all the perfectly executed offense and defense, the art of taking a punch could be the most valuable lesson of all. Okay, maybe I'm wrong about that, but give Danny his due and let him give the future Hall of Famer a good shot in the chops for all us underdogs. Then tell Danny to run like hell.

JAY KRISHAN
Toronto, ON ■

[Looking Ahead]

By Don Stewart

Consolation Prize For Cunningham

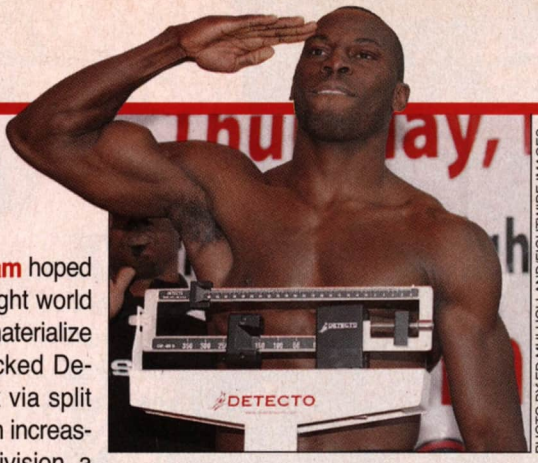


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Cunningham will attempt to regain IBF cruiser title

Like most fans, **Steve Cunningham** hoped a rematch with THE RING cruiserweight world champion **Tomasz Adamek** would materialize last year following their action-packed December 2008 tilt that Adamek took via split decision. But with Adamek's attention increasingly focused on the heavyweight division, a return bout is starting to look as likely as another U.S. President named Millard.

Instead of Adamek, Cunningham will get a chance to regain the IBF belt March 19 when he duels with **Matt Godfrey** at the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise, Florida. Adamek vacated the strap in October.

"It's kind of bittersweet," Cunningham said. "I've wanted the rematch since December. I thought I did enough to win the fight then and I wanted to take my belt back from Adamek, but if the rematch can't be made, this is the next best thing."

For the 33-year-old Cunningham, 22-2 (11), it's a chance to strengthen his claim as heir apparent to Adamek, assuming Adamek relinquishes his title at some point. Cunningham is already THE RING's number-one contender. The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, native's resume includes wins against second-ranked **Krzysztof Wlodarczyk** and number four **Marco Huck**, both in 2007.

Godfrey, ranked ninth, shouldn't be overlooked. The 30-year-old Providence, Rhode Island, native has earned his shot at a belt with four-straight wins following a March 2008 points loss to **Rudolf Kraj** in Germany. "Too Smooth" is slick enough to give anyone in the division trouble. He's also shown grit in coming off the floor to beat **Emmanuel Nwodo** and **Michael Simms**.

"My sights are set," said Cunningham, "on beating Matt Godfrey."

Upset Alert?

A "Super Six World Boxing Classic" favorite ventures away from his native Europe to face a young, quick-fisted U.S. underdog named Andre in California. Sound familiar?

Last November, **Andre Ward** shook up the Super Six by stunning co-favorite **Mikkel Kessler** in Oakland, California. **Andre Dirrell** will try to repeat the pattern March 6 when he meets Germany's **Arthur Abraham** in a Showtime-televised bout at Rancho Mirage, California.

Thus far, no one has been able to solve the riddle that is Abraham, 31-0 (25). However, Dirrell's hand speed, skills. and unorthodox style could prove troublesome for "King Arthur," who has only fought outside Germany twice. Dirrell, 18-1 (13), in need of a win after his Stage One points loss to **Carl Froch**, should also have desperation on his side.

Head Hunting

Forget **Ali Funeka-Joan Guzman**, **Juan Diaz-Paulie Malignaggi** I, and **Sergio Martinez-Kermit Cintron**. The most controversial result of 2009 might have come November 21 in Mexico, where hardheaded challenger **Rodel Mayol** used an apparently intentional headbutt to stop long-reigning junior flyweight beltholder **Edgar Sosa** in two rounds.

Sosa needed a three-hour surgery to fix the multiple fractures sustained to his left cheekbone. The WBC refused to overturn Mayol's win, but tried to appease Sosa by naming him "champion emeritus," a tag that gives him the right to demand a title shot.

With Sosa still healing, Mayol is moving on. The 28-year-old Filipino will defend March 12 in Dallas, Texas, against Mexico's **Manuel Vargas**, 26-4-1 (11), on the eve of the **Manny Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey** bout. Mayol-Vargas will air on Top Rank's new Fox Sports Net series.

Mayol, 26-4-1 (20), had failed in his four previous attempts to win belts, including a pair of 2009 tries at THE RING junior flyweight champ **Ivan Calderon** that both ended early due to headbutt-induced cuts. Sosa might have seen enough; he's reportedly seeking to move up and challenge flyweight beltholder **Koki Kameda** instead of sticking around for a rematch with Mayol.

Listen up

On the Mayol-Vargas undercard, former top-10 heavyweight **Samuel Peter** will face **Nagy Aguilera**, 15-2 (10), in a somewhat intriguing bout. Peter, 33-3 (26) has shed some pounds, leading to three-straight knockout wins since back-to-back losses to **Vitali Klitschko** and **Eddie Chambers**. Aguilera, 23, is coming off an upset stoppage of **Oleg Maskaev**, the guy Peter beat to win a belt back in March 2008 … Less than six months after his comeback kayo of **Shane Cameron** in New Zealand, 37-year-old **David Tua**, 50-3-1 (43), will be back in action March 27 against veteran **Friday "The Thirteenth" Ahunanya**, 24-5-3 (13). Tua had a 25-month break before the Cameron fight finally came off. Ahunanya, 38, has been off since his June 2008 points win against previously unbeaten **Alonzo Butler**, so don't be stunned if this one is shelved by the time you read this. ■

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